

ANCIENT AND HINDU INDIA

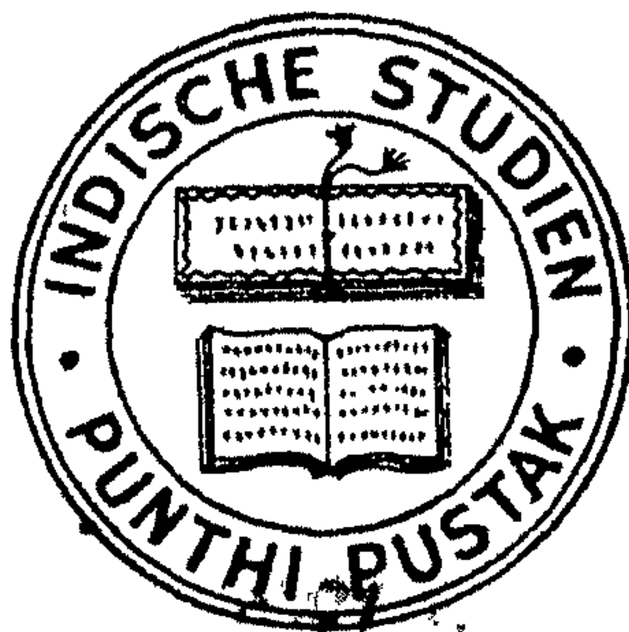
ANCIENT AND HINDU INDIA

THE BRAHMANIC PERIOD

by

J. TALBOYS WHEELER





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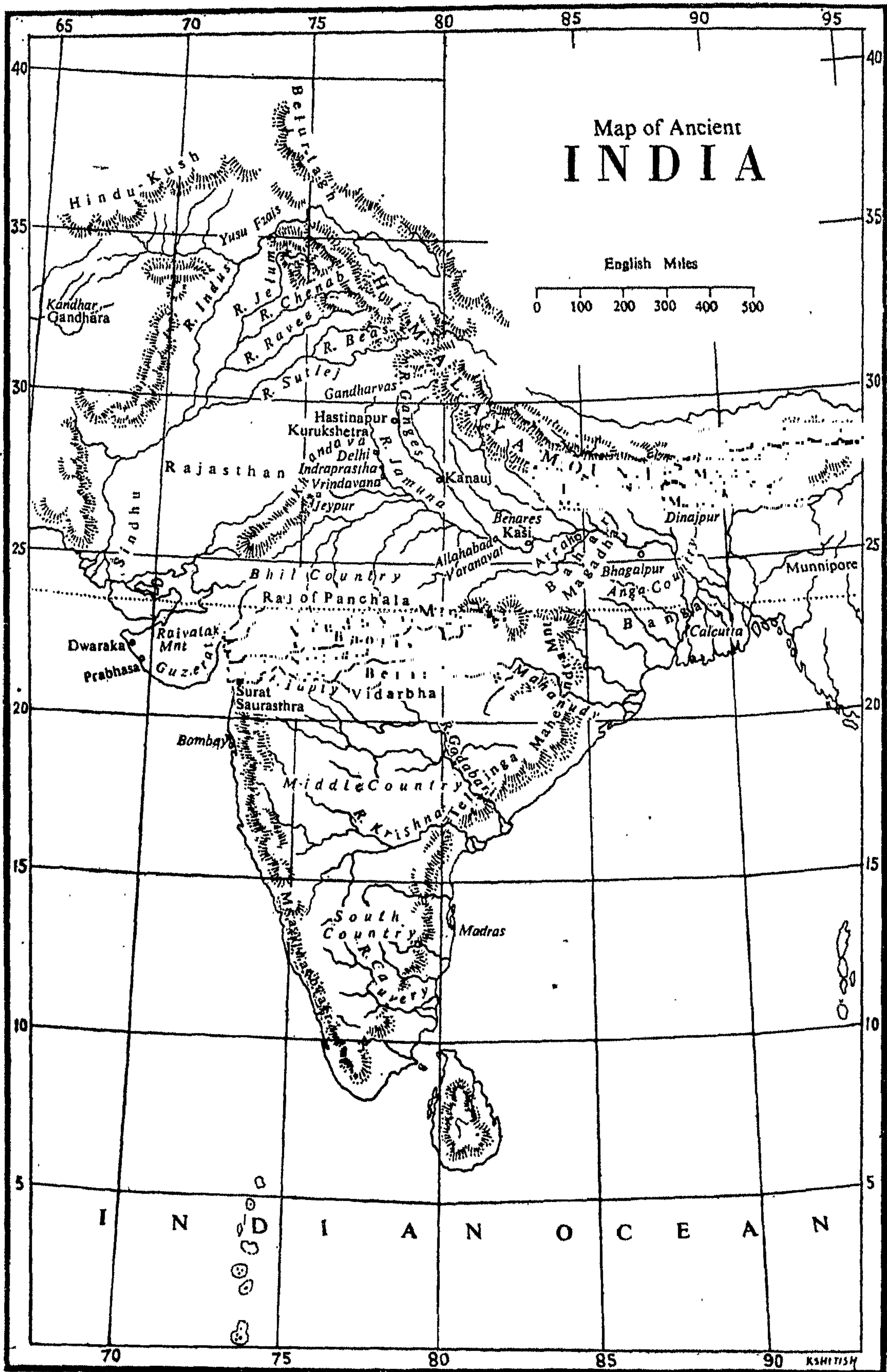
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present volume comprises a detailed review of what the author terms, somewhat arbitrarily, the Brahmanic age of the History of India. This review was first published in Vol. II, Part V of his work, *The History of India from the Earliest Ages,* and relates to a great religious post-Vedic era, namely, the Brahmanic period which, according to the author, "was a gloomy sacerdotal age, in which the feasts of the Kshatriyas were converted into sacrifices for the atonement of sins against Brahmanical law; and in which divine worship was reduced to a system of austerities and meditations upon the Supreme Spirit as Brahma."

The text is published with slight alterations, here and there.

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CHAPTER I

FOUR EPOCHS OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY

The history of the people of India, ancient and modern, should be considered as something distinct from that of Mussulman and British rule. Indeed neither Mussulman nor European can be said to have hitherto created any enduring impression upon the national mind. The religious revolutions which have stirred up the life of the Hindu to its uttermost depths, have been nearly all of indigenous growth. They have sprung up from within rather than from without; and must be generally regarded as the product of the Hindu' mind. For ages the people have been shut in from the outer world by the Himálayas and the sea, and their religious faith has been formed from the consciousness alone. The history of the progress and development of religious thought in India is thus of the highest importance in the history of man; inasmuch as it illustrates the sources of many ideas and sentiments, which find expression in what has been termed natural religion. At the same time its range of development is more extensive than that of any other existing faith; for it rises with the dawn of consciousness as regards the existence of a superior being or beings with reference to the present life, and ascends to the highest dogmas in the conception of one Supreme Deity, who is over all and in all, not only in this life but in that which is to come.

The history of the people of India, if considered as something distinct from the annals of conquest, is emphatically a religious history; and so closely has every act and duty been associated from time immemorial with religious belief in the mind of the Hindu, that we are enabled by means of the religious books which have been preserved, to obtain a tolerably clear insight into the important changes which have taken place at different intervals in the manners and ideas of the people at large. Reserving all minor distinctions for discussion hereafter, it may in the first instance be convenient to map out the religious history of the people of India into four great epochs, corresponding with the four great changes in their religious belief, namely, 1st, The Vedic age. 2nd, The Brah-

manic age. 3rd, The Buddhist age. 4th, The age of Brahmanical revival.

The religion of the Vedic age consisted in offerings of food and wine, accompanied by outpourings of prayers and praises to elementary deities and other personified abstractions, in the hope of obtaining thereby such material blessings as health, prosperity, long life, abundance of sons, prolific cattle, and overflowing harvests. It was also associated with a crude belief in the existence of the ghosts of ancestors, who might be propitiated with offerings of food and water; but it scarcely recognised that belief in the immortality of the soul, and a future state of reward and punishment, which has found such large expression in later creeds. It was in fact an early form of polytheism, when men saw deity in the clouds and heard him in the wind. The process by which the unenlightened but inquiring intellect of the Vedic Aryans rose from the idea of many gods to the conception of one Supreme Being, is of the utmost importance in the history of religious development, and is exhibited with considerable clearness in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. In the first instance the simple worshipper praised the immediate object of his adoration as the God above all gods, the almighty, the supreme; much in the same fashion as he belauded his own patriarchal Chieftain as the greatest of heroes, the mightiest of warriors, the Raja of Rajas, whose fame had spread throughout the three worlds. Familiarity with this form of thought may have subsequently led to the inquiry as to who was the Being who caused the life of the universe; and this question is propounded by the Vedic bard in the following language: "From earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul?" Hence arose two conceptions of monotheism. The more ancient and material conception appears to have existed in the identification of the Sun as the Supreme Spirit of light and fire, which animated the whole universe, and which seems to have been associated with the worship of Agni. A later and more spiritual conception identified the Supreme Spirit with a deity named Prajápati, who was worshipped as the Supreme Soul.

The Brahmanic religion seems to have been originally distinct from the Vedic religion. The religious ideas which characterized each faith seem to have originated from different sources, although they may have sprung up side by side. The

Vedic worship is the expression of a child-like desire to gratify the national gods by offerings of food and wine. The Brahmanic worship is on the other hand an expression of fear at having sinned against deity, and an attempt to appease his wrath by austerities and sacrifices. When however the two classes of ideas came into contact, the old Vedic deities were not set aside by the Bráhmans, but were simply placed in subordination to the god Brahma; who was represented as the creator of gods and men, and the especial deity of the Bráhmans; and who was remotely associated with the dogma that goodness would be rewarded and sin punished both in this life and in the life hereafter. The Brahmanic age was thus emphatically an age of religious compromise. The Vedic deities were still acknowledged as inferior gods, but placed under the supremacy of Brahmá, as their creator; and the heaven of the Vedic deities was placed far lower in the ideal universe than the heaven of the eternal Brahma.[1] In like manner the monotheistic conceptions of the Vedic Aryans were amalgamated with those of the Bráhmans. Agni and Prajápati, Vedic idealizations of a Supreme Being, were each in turn identified with Brahma. By this process the early Bráhmans appear to have succeeded in super-adding a belief in endless transmigrations of the soul,—in austerities as a means of obtaining reward, and in sacrifices as expiation for sin,—to the old primitive worship of the Aryan deities, which looked only for material blessings. At the same time the Bráhmans seem to have reduced the primitive classes of society to a rigid caste system; and to have converted that system into an engine of ecclesiastical oppression, by which every action of a man as a husband, a father, a householder and a citizen, was brought under the tyranny of caste rule, and human passions and aspirations were pressed down until the Hindu people were little better than religious automatons. The character of this important compromise between the simple forms of Vedic worship and the complicated system of Brahmanism, will form the main subject of inquiry in the present sketch of the Brahmanic age. But in investigating the various branches of the subject, it will be

[1] A distinction must be here laid down between Brahma the Supreme Soul, and Brahmá who is only the creator, or rather the creative energy of Brahma. Without any accent the word Brahma signifies the Supreme Soul; with an accent on the final letter, Brahmá signifies the creator only.

constantly necessary to refer to the Vedic period; inasmuch as such an investigation tends to indicate the opposition between the ideas and institutions of the Vedic age and those of the Brahmanic age, which are rendered perceptible by a comparison of the hymns of the Rig Veda with the institutes of Manu.

Inasmuch as traces of the two succeeding eras of Buddhism and Brahmanism are to be found in the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana, it may be as well to indicate in the present place the broad features which distinguish each of those epochs from the remaining three.

With the dawn of Buddhism a footing is established in modern chronology. The advent of Sákya Muni, who is generally regarded as the great teacher and founder of Buddhism in India, has been referred to the sixth century before the Christian era by a series of calculations which will be duly considered hereafter. This famous personage seems for a while to have effected a complete revolution in the religious belief of the Hindus. He threw contempt upon the simple prayers of the Vedic Aryans for the material blessings of this life, by enunciating an idea which has found expression amongst bards and prophets of all ages, nemely, that the pleasures of this world are altogether unreal and unsubstantial, the mere creations of the imagination. He taught as a vital truth the sentiment which is involved in the words of a modern poet, and which is familiar to the current religious thought of the European :

"The world is all a fleeting show
for man's delusion given ;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow."

But Sákya Muni went further. The modern European idea reposes upon the conclusion that there is nothing true in the universe of being, saving the life hereafter in heaven. The old Bráhmans taught that men were constantly committing sins, which could only be expiated by penances and sacrifices; and that the performance of penances and sacrifices, in excess of such expiation, would secure a corresponding amount of rewards either in this life or the life hereafter. But Sákya Muni cut at the very root of these creeds by proclaiming that existence itself was an evil to gods and men; that the one grand object of gods and men was not to prolong their miserable existence for the sake of such

deluding phantoms as wealth, pleasure, or power, either in this life or in future existences; but rather to crush out all human passions and yearnings, and thus to deliver the soul from the vortex of ever-recurring transmigrations, and enable it to take refuge in a state of utter and eternal repose. Such repose is an Oriental idea of perfect and divine felicity, and is termed Nirvána; but in reality it is little more than an idea of utter annihilation, inasmuch as it involved the destruction of all individuality, until nothing was left but mere intellect in undisturbed slumber. It may also be remarked, as a significant fact in the history of man that this idea of repose, this longing after eternal rest, did not find its full force in an age of evil and tribulation, when afflicted humanity sought relief from the thousand ills that flesh is heir to; but in an age of sensual gratification, when profuse indulgence had produced a sickening satiety, which found expression in the words of the Preacher of old:—"All, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit."

The circumstances which led to the expulsion of Buddhism from India, and the triumphant revival of Brahmanism, are still involved in some obscurity. In the present place it may suffice to say that the great Brahmanical revival seems to have originated in a democratic appeal to the sympathies and aspirations of the masses, who might reasonably be supposed to be less capable of apprehending the transcendental happiness involved in the idea of Nirvána, and to feel a livelier appreciation of the more substantial enjoyments of human existence as they are generally understood by the bulk of the community. Indeed it may be remarked that unless religion promises substantive blessings and rewards, or is associated with sectarian ideas which perpetuate it as a living principle by that force of antagonism which perpetuates so many dogmas, it soon fails to act as a motive power or spring of action. It is thus easy to comprehend that amidst the corruptions of a Buddhist priesthood, a religious belief which offered no spiritual consolation beyond rest or annihilation, and which ignored rather than satisfied the innate yearnings of the soul after a supreme good, soon failed to exercise an influence upon the general community, who hankered after the fleshpots of Egypt, and burned with the eagerness of youthful voluptuaries to receive material blessings from their old national gods in return for sacrifice and prayer. Under such circumstances the appeal of the Bráhmans to

the popular sentiment could scarcely fail of success. The worship of the old Vedic deities, who had been held in derision during the age of Buddhism, was partially revived. The worship of Vishnu and Siva, which was unknown to the composers of the Rig-Veda, but which seem to have largely prevailed throughout India, was recognized and adopted by the apostles of the Brahmanical revival. Vishnu and Siva were each identified with Brahma, and ultimately with each other. Ráma and Krishna, the traditional heroes of the people of India, whose histories have been household words for ages, were declared to be incarnations of the god Vishnu; whilst even the animals who were worshipped by the pre-Aryan races, such as the fish, the tortoise, the boar, and the lion, were represented as incarnations of the same deity. In like manner the worship of the Linga, which appears to have originated in a remote antiquity, was associated with the worship of Siva; and the deification of the female principle, the Earth Goddess, which appears to have sprung up amongst many primitive tribes, and was supposed to grant abundant harvests and prolific cattle, became associated with Parvati, the wife of Siva, under a variety of names of which perhaps Durgá and Káli are the widest known. Numerous other deifications were in like manner admitted into the pantheon of the Bráhmans; such as gods of love, of war, of wealth, and of good luck; as well as deified animals and things belonging to an ancient fetische worship, including cows, snakes, birds, trees, plants, rivers, mountains, books, stones and logs of wood; all of which were incorporated in the Brahmanical system under a variety of mythical interpretations and transformations, until the Hindus themselves have ignorantly believed that their gods were three hundred and thirty millions in number.[2]

The chronology of these four great epochs in the history of the Hindus may perhaps be indicated as follows:

[2] The names of all these deified personifications are not indicated in this volume. It will suffice to state that Káma is the god of love, Kártikeya the god of war; Kuvera the god of wealth; and Ganesa, the elephant-headed and big-bellied idol, the god of good luck and prosperity.

The age of the Brahmanical revival is sometimes styled the Puránic age or the age in which the Puránas were composed. The Puránas certainly received their present form during this period, and the legends they contain are chiefly valuable as illustrations of the period of Brahmanical revival.

1st.—The Vedic age, which was characterized by the worship of the elementary deities, such as Agni and Indra, and appears to have prevailed in the Punjab prior to the disappearance of the Saraswati river in the sand.[3]

2nd.—The Brahmanic age, which was characterized by the worship of Brahma, and appears to have prevailed between the disappearance of the Saraswati in the sand, and the advent of Sákya Muni about B.C. 600.

3rd.—The Buddhist age, which was characterized by the pursuit of Nirvána, and appears to have prevailed from about B.C. 600 to A.D. 800 or 1000.

4th.—The Brahmanical revival, which was characterized by the worship of incarnations of deities, and appears to have prevailed from about A.D. 800 to the present time.

Whilst, however, the attempt has been made to map out the religious history of the Hindus into four distinct periods, it by no means follows that such an arrangement of eras is to be regarded as an expression of definite chronology. On the one hand an attempt to arrive at approximate chronological data, and to calculate the probable duration of Hindu forms of religious belief by reference to what is known of the duration of modern revolutions in religious thought, carries back the imagination to a period so far removed from all recorded history, that synchronisms could only be found in astronomical calculations of the revolutions of the stars. Again, in dealing with revolutions brought about by the progress and development of religious thought, it is impossible to fix any chronological interval, less perhaps than a thousand years, between the time when an old faith passess away and the time when a new faith finds full expression, and fairly lays hold of the national mind. One age runs into its successor and mingles with its current; just as the heathenism of Greece and Rome continued to exist long after the advent of Christianity; and just as Roman Catholicism still continues to exist, and may exist for hundreds of generations yet to come, although at least three centuries may be said to have passed away since the advent of the Protestant Reformation. To this day very many traces of

[3] The significance of the disappearance of the Saraswati, as separating two eras from each other, will be pointed out in Chapter II., on Vedic and Brahmanic geography.

the old Vedic worship are still to be found in the popular faith and ritual of the masses in India ; whilst the innovating doctrines of Buddhism, which were so hotly persecuted by the Bráhmans, still linger in many recesses of the Hindu' mind. Stranger still, the fetische form of worship, which belongs to the remotest antiquity, still flourishes in India, and is especially to be found in the rural districts, where it exercises no small influence upon the minds and actions of the masses.[4]

The following chapters will thus be immediately devoted to a consideration of the ideas and institutions of the Brahmanic age. Accordingly, before commencing the inquiry, it may be advisable to consider two important points, which bear upon the general subject, namely : 1st.—The duration of the Brahmanic age. 2nd.—The light which the Brahmanic age throws upon the Vedic period.

From the data already laid down it would seem that the old Brahmanc age intervened between the decline of the Vedic worship and the rise of Buddhism. In other words, between the reduction of the Vedic worship to an established ritual in association with the worship of Brahma, which seems to have taken place at some remote period more or less corresponding with the disappearance of the Saraswati river in the sand ; and the early teachings of Sákya Muni, who seems to have flourished in the sixth century before the Christian era. But whilst for the sake of clearness the transition period between Brahmanism and Buddhism has been referred to the sixth century B.C., it seems certain that the current of Brahmanism flowed on until a much later date. When Sákya Muni began to promulgate the peculiar dogmas of Buddhism to the people of Hindu'stan, he found himself surrounded by Brahmans, many of whom became his converts and disciples ; and it was not until after his death that a hostile opposition arose between the Bráhmans and Buddhists, which eventuated in religious wars and cruel persecutions, that still find expression in local traditions, as well as in the burnt and charred remains of Buddhist monasteries of olden time. Indeed Brahman-

[4] Indra, one of the most celebrated of the Vedic deities, is still worshipped in the great annual festival in the south of India, known as the Pangol, or "boiling". Again, many traces of the worship of Buddha are to be found at Jagannáth; and missionaries in many quarters report that Buddhist doctrines have left a deep impression upon the rural population.

ism seems never to have been entirely subverted, for otherwise its resuscitation ten or twelve centuries after death of Sákya Muni could have been scarcely possible. Moreover it will be seen hereafter that Brahmanism appears to satisfy the crude aspirations of mankind in an early stage of civilization; and is in accordance with a popular idea of divine justice in the government of the world, that every good act will be separately considered and rewarded, and that every sinful act will be separately considered and punished, either in this life or in the life hereafter. On the other hand Buddhism is essentially an aristocratic creed, suitable only to the philosophic yearnings of a rich and noble class, in whom self-indulgence in every gratification has produced a surfeit of pleasure; and who are consequently driven by sheer satiety to seek a life of abstinence and contemplation, which will ultimately tend to a dreamy spiritual existence of eternal repose and undisturbed slumber.

A further idea of the probable duration of the old Brahmanical period may perhaps be derived from a consideration of the period in which the code of Manu appears to have been composed. It will be seen hereafter that whilst this code recognizes the worship of the Vedic deities as part of the great compromise between Vedic and Brahmanic rites, which characterized the Brahmanic period, it refers to the atheists and revilers of the Veda, who are to be identified with the Buddhists, and it directs that no Brahmans should settle in their neighbourhood. At the same time it takes no cognizance of that worship of incarnations of deity which characterized the later era of Brahmanical revival; and especially it contains but slight reference to Vishnu or Siva, the two great deities of the modern religion of the Hindus. Accordingly, although the date of the code is still involved in some obscurity, its composition may perhaps be referred to the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, or to those which immediately follow that epoch.[5]

As regards the reflex light which the following investigations into the history of the Brahmanic age will throw upon the Vedic age, it will suffice to remark that the illustrations to be traced

[5] Reference is certainly made in the code to the Puránas and Upanishad; still the greater portion of the code seems to have been composed long before the Puránas received their present form.

among Brahmanic materials will be found to furnish new and important additions to the stock of information respecting the old Vedic settlements in the Punjab, which has already been gathered from the hymns of the Rig-Veda. In this connection nine salient points may be indicated as follows :

1st, The geographical distinction between the Vedic settlements and the Brahmanic settlements ; the former being referable to the Punjab and the latter to Hindu′stan. 2nd, The distinction between the Rishis and the Bráhmans ; the former being Vedic psalmists and worshippers of the Vedic deities, whilst the latter were sacrificing priests and worshippers of the god Brahma. 3rd, The distinction between the Vedic conception of Manu as the first man, and the Brahmanic conception of Manu as the Hindu′ lawgiver. 4th, The distinction between the creation of the universe by Manu and the similar creation by Brahmá. 5th, The distinction between the Vedic and Brahmanic systems of chronology ; the former being apparently based upon a calculation of Manwantaras, or reigns of successive Manus, whilst the latter was based upon a succession of Kalpas, or days of Brahma. 6th, The distinction between the Vedic worship and the Brahmanic worship. 7th, The distinction between the Vedic forms of marriage and the Brahmanic rites. 8th, The distinction between the Vedic Sráddha and the Brahmanic rite. 9th, The distinction between the Kshatriya and the Bráhman, which especially characterizes the laws respecting the four castes.

In addition, however, to these main points, many other characteristics of the Vedic and Brahmanic periods will appear in future chapters, and further illustrate the radical distinction which exists between the two ages. Moreover, an attempt will be made in the cancluding chapter of the present volume, under the head of "Historical Resume", to classify and arrange all available data in the Epic traditions, as will serve to illustrate the successive stages in the development of the Hindu′ people ; and establish, if possible, a chronological sequence which shall approximate as nearly as may be to the current conception of historical annals.

CHAPTER II

VEDIC AND BRAHMANIC GEOGRAPHY

The first point to be settled in the history of the Brahmanic age is the relative geographical position of the Vedic and Brahmanic settlements at the dawn of tradition. This point is of considerable importance, as in consequence of the systematic Brahmanizing of all Vedic traditions, which characterizes the sacred literature of the Hindus, the early localities of the Vedic and Brahmanic peoples have been hitherto confounded together; and the geographical distinction between the two classes of settlements can only be ascertained after a critical investigation of the data which are to be found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda and laws of Manu.

According to Manu there were two ancient territories in the north-west quarter of India, which seem to have been more or less separated from each other by a once famous river known as the Saraswati. This river might be roughly described as flowing from the Himalayas towards the south in a parallel line with the Sutlej and Jumná, and about half way between the two; and thus the Aryan invaders from the north-west would have to cross the Saraswati on their way from the Punjab to Hindu'stan. The region to the westward of the river is said by Manu to have been created or frequented by the Devatas, or gods of the Vedic Aryans. The region to the eastward of the river is said to have been the country of the ancient Bráhman priests, the worshippers of the god Brahma.[1] This distinction between the Devatas, or gods of the Vedic Aryans, and Brahma,

[1] The distinction between the eastward and westward of the river is not clearly laid down by Manu, and the obscurity is rendered greater by a confusion as regards the real Saraswati, which seems to have taken place in modern maps. A landmark, known as the Vinasana, or disappearance of the Saraswati, is fixed by Manu, as the western boundary of the Middle region; and consequently it has been inferred that the same boundary separated the Brahmanic territory from the Vedic territory. That they were separated is certain, as Manu describes Brahmárshi-desa as being west of Brahmávarta.

or god of the Bráhmans, must be especially borne in mind in dealing with the history of ancient India. In Hindu' traditions the gods are frequently identified with their worshippers. Thus the term "Devatas" often points to the Vedic people, whilst the term "Brahma" may sometimes point to the Bráhman people. It should also be added, that whilst the god Brahma was scarcely known to the composers of the Vedic hymns, no pains are spared in the code of Manu to represent Brahma as a deity distinct from, and far superior to, all the Vedic deities.

On the first glance at these geographical data, it would appear that the territory of the Vedic Aryans might be identified with the modern Punjab, and that the territory of the Bráhmans might be in like manner identified with that of Hindu'stan proper. Indeed it is by no means improbable that this conjecture involves an important geographical fact, namely, a distinction between the Vedic people and Brahmanic people, corresponding to the distinction between the Punjab and Hindu'stan. In the hymns of the Rig-Veda frequent reference is made to the land of the seven rivers, created by Indra and Agni, which rivers seem to correspond to the seven rivers of the Punjab ;[2] whilst it is plain from other allusions that the Aryan settlements extended southward along the main stream of the Indus or Sindhu towards the modern Karachi. In like manner it is certain that at a later period the Brahmans occupied the greater part of Hindu'stan, and became identified with that territory. Manu, however, restricts both the Vedic region and the Brahmanic region to a much more limited area, and distinguishes each one by a Brahmanical name. The Vedic territory is described as a small tract between the so-called Saraswati and Dhrishadwati, which have been identified with two little streams known in modern maps as the Sersooty and Caggar, and enclose between them a little territory about sixty miles long and from twenty-four to forty miles wide. The Brahmanic territory occupied in the mind of Manu a far larger area, but one which was still confined to western Hindu'stan, namely, from the bank of the Saraswati to the bank of the Ganges in the neighbourhood of the famous city of Kanouj, an interval

[2] The seven rivers of the Punjab consist of the Indus and the Saraswati, and the five rivers between them, namely, the Jhelum, the Chenub, the Ravi, the Beas, and the Sutlej.

of about three hundred miles as the crow flies. The Brahmanical names applied by Manu to both regions, open up a question of some importance. The Vedic region he calls by the name of Brahmávarta, and the Brahmanic region by the name of Brahmárshi-desa. The latter name of Brahmárshi-desa, as designating the country of the divine priests or Bráhmans, is probably historical; as the tradition is widely spread throughout India that the region indicated as Brahmárshi-desa is the mother-country of the Bráhmans. The name, however, of Brahmávarta, which Manu applies to the Vedic settlement on the Saraswati, is apparently a mythical appellation of comparatively modern date. If both countries were named after Brahma, it seems difficult to understand why any distinction should have been laid down between them. Moreover, in the Vedic period, as will be seen hereafter, the river Saraswati flowed on to the river Indus. In the Brahmanic period, however, when the code of Manu was promulgated, the same river disappeared in the sand long before it reached the Indus; and Vinasana, or the place of the disappearance of the river, was adopted by Manu as a landmark which formed the western boundary of the middle region. Thus at the time when the river Saraswati flowed to the Indus, the Vedic deities were alone worshipped by the Vedic Aryans. In the succeeding age, however, when the Saraswati disappeared in the sand, the god Brahma was worshipped as the one Supreme Being, and the Vedic deities were either depreciated or neglected by the Bráhmans. Indeed, throughout the Institutes of Manu, the god Brahma is persistently represented as infinitely superior to the Vedic gods. He is described as the creator of the Devatas; and a day of Brahmá is said to have been equal to many thousand years of the Devatas.[3] Manu, however, has unconsciously revealed the real truth, as regards the mythical origin of the term "Brahmávarta". In speaking of the Vedic tract, he says: "This country was created by the Devatas [i.e. Vedic gods], and therefore the sages [i.e. the Bráhmans of a later age, of whom Manu was the representative] gave it the name of Brahmávarta.[4]

[3] This alleged superiority of Brahmá to the Devatas is still more strikingly put forward in the Rámáyana, where the Vedic deities are represented as flying to Brahmá for protection against Rávana.

[4] Manu ii, 17. It will be seen hereafter that the geography of Manu must be referred to a time when the Aryans had conquered the whole of

A comparison of the geographical data in the Rig-Veda, when the river Saraswati flowed on to the Indus, with the geographical data in Manu, when the same river disappeared in the sand long before it reached the Indus, will fully confirm the conclusions which have been laid down. The Saraswati river is known in the Rig-Veda as the seventh stream ; because apparently it was the seventh and last stream which the Vedic Aryans had to cross in their way from the Punjab to Hindu'stan proper, or in other words from the banks of the Sutlej to the banks of the Jumná.[5] It was also called the mother of the Indus or Sindhu' ; probably because it flowed into the Indus, and thus fed or nourished that river. Its praises are duly hymned in the Rig-Veda as the mightiest of rivers, the beautiful goddess, the protecting deity, the bestower of food and riches. "This Saraswati, firm as a city made of iron, flows rapidly with all sustaining water, sweeping away in its might all other waters, as a charioteer clears the road : Saraswati, chief and parent of rivers, flowing from the mountains to the ocean.... May the auspicious and gracious Saraswati hear our praises at this sacrifice, approached as she is with reverence and with bended knees : We present to thee, Saraswati, these oblations with reverence ; be gratified by our praise ; and may we ever recline upon thee, as upon a sheltering tree."[6] These *mantras* evidently belong to a period anterior to Brahmanism. They are the expression of men who personified their river as a female deity, and poured out their souls in a fetische worship, combining poetical sentiment with self-interested devotion. But they are not the expressions of men under Brahmanical influences, for they contain no allusion whatever to such essentials in Brahmanical ideas as the doctrine of merits and demerits, of sacrifices and penances as associated with the conception of sin, the transmigrations of the soul, and the future states of punishment and reward.

Manu's geographical notices of Brahmávarta and Brahmárshidesa are altogether of a different character.[7] Instead of indicating

Hindstan; and that even in his time the area of Brahmanism was by no means co-extensive with the area occupied by the Aryans.

[5] Rig-Veda, Mand. ii. Hymn 36, v. 6.

[6] Ib. Hymn 95.

[7] The following translation of the texts in Manu will be found useful for reference. Besides Brahmavárta and Brahmárshi-desa, it will be found

what would appear to be an important line of Aryan settlements westward of the Saraswati, Manu simply defines a contracted little colony between the upper course of the Saraswati, now called the Sersooty, and a tributary of the same river, named the Drishadwati, but now known as the Caggar.[8]

But the texts of Manu quoted below contain two highly significant statements, which not only throw still further light upon the all-important distinction between Brahmávarta and Brahmárshi-desa, but also seem to point to the origin of caste as well as to that of Brahmanism. Speaking of the tract on the Saraswati, Manu says : "The custom prevalent in that tract, received from successive tradition, concerning the castes and mixed castes, is called the good custom." This remark seems to imply that the caste system originated in the Aryan colony,

to refer to two other regions, namely, Madhya-desa, or the Middle region, and Aryávarta, or the Aryan pale.

I.—Brahmavarta.—"The distinction between the two divine rivers, the Sarawasti and the Drishadwati,—that God-created tract they call the Brahmavárta. The custom prevalent in that tract, received from successive tradition, concerning the castes and the mixed castes, is called the good custom."

II.—Brahmarshi-desa.—"Kurukshetra, the Matsyas, the Panchálas, and the Surasenas. This land which comes to Brahmávarta, is the land of Brahmárshis (Brahmárshi-desa, or the land of divine sages). From a Bráhman born in that district let all the men on the earth learn their several duties."

III.—Madhya-desa.—"The tract between the Himálaya and Vindhya, to the east of Vinasana, and to the west of Prayága, is called the central region (Madhya-desa)."

IV.—Aryavarta.—"The space between those two mountain ranges to the eastern and the western sea, the wise know as Aryávarta (or the land of the Aryans.)"

"Where the black antelope naturally grazes is to be held as the proper land for offering sacrifices; all else is Mlechchha-land. Let the twice-born carefully keep within these countries; but a Sudra distressed for subsistence, may dwell anywhere." Cowell's translation of Manu, ii. 17—24, in Elphinstones *History of India*, fifth edition, p. 225.

[8] Manu's misconception as regards the Aryan settlement in Vedic times seems to have led to some misrepresentation on modern maps. The name of Sersooty, as a corruption of Saraswati, has been restricted to the upper course of the river before its junction with the Caggar; and the Sersooty has thus been converted from a main stream into a tributary. On the other hand the name of the Caggar has been extended over the whole course of the Saraswati to the spot where it disappears in the sand.

probably from the relations which subsisted between the conquerors and conquered. Again, speaking of Brahmárshi-desa, he says : "From a Bráhman born in that district let all the men in the earth learn their several duties." This remark would seem to imply that Brahmárshi-desa was the mother country of the Bráhmans. Thus two important inferences may be drawn :

First, that the caste system originated in the country to the westward of the river Saraswati.

Secondly, that Brahmanism originated in the country to the eastward of the river Saraswati, that is, in the region betwen the Saraswati and the Jumná.[9]

The curtain of Indian history thus rises upon two distinct regions, occupying opposite banks of the river Saraswati, namely, Brahmávarta, or the land of Devatas, and Brahmárshi-desa, or the land of Bráhmans. But Manu describes two other regions, namely, Madhya-desa, or the Middle region, and Aryávarta, or the Aryan pale. The geographical data in connection with this mapping out of Hindu'stan are of considerable importance, inasmuch as they furnish a further illustration of the chronological interval between the hymns of the Rig-Veda and the laws of Manu ; between the flowing of the Saraswati into the Indus and the disappearance of the Saraswati in the sand. The Middle region extended from the disappearance of the Saraswati to the junction of the Ganges and Jumná at Alláhabád ; but Aryávarta,

[9] The country which Manu terms Brahmárshi appears to have extended over the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna from the neighbourhood of Delhi and Hastinapur to the neighbourhood of Kanauj, an ancient city of great renown, which was situated on the Ganges about sixty-five miles to the westward of Lucknow. The localities indicated in the texts of Manu already quoted, may be identified as follows : The plain of Kurukshetra must have been situated in the neighbourhood of the settlements of the Kauravas and Pándavas at Hastinapur and Delhi. The country of Matsya is dubious, but may have been the modern Jaipur. The identifications of Panchála with Kanyakubja or Kanauj, and of Surasena with Mathura, rest on the authority of Kulluka, the commentator of Manu, and may have been connected with the worship of Krishna; Kanyakubja being the name of the humpbacked woman who was healed by Krishna, and Sura being the Chieftain of the Yadavas at Mathura, and the reputed grandfather of Krishna. It has already been doubted whether the Raj of Panchála, possessed by Raja Drupada, really extended as far as Kanauj; but this by no means militates against Kulluka's representation of the extent of Brahmárshi, the land of the Brahman Rishis.

or the land of Aryans, extended from sea to sea[10] Thus in the time of the Rig-Veda the Aryans had advanced only to the "seventh stream" or Saraswati; whilst in the time of Manu they had spread throughout Hindustan. It may also be added that the Institutes of Manu were composed prior to any conquest of the Dekhan; for Manu expressly forbids any men of the three twice-born castes from dwelling in any other country than Aryávarta.

But there is another and still more significant point in the geography of Manu which must not be overlooked. In his reference to the most ancient period, which has been here termed the Vedic age, the area of the Aryans is a very small tract in comparison with the area of the Bráhmans. But it will be seen in his description of the Brahmanical period, in which he himself flourished, that the Aryan pale was a far more extensive area than the Bráhman pale. The country of the Bráhmans only extended from the Saraswati to the Ganges; but the country of Aryávarta extended over the whole of Hindustan. In other words, the advancing tide of Aryans had poured through Brahmárshi-desa, and had doubtless carried with them much of the Brahmanical faith and ritual; although the orthodoxy and morals of a gallant race of heroes who had conquered Hindustan, must have appeared dubious in the eyes of a true Bráhman. They drove war chariots, tamed wild horses, and were proficients in the use of the bow and battle-axe; and so far their services were valuable as protecting the Bráhmans, Vaisyas, and Sudras,—the priests, merchants, and cultivators,—against the barbarous aborigines. But they were addicted to wine, gambling, and flesh meat, which were one and all an abomination to the Bráhman. Moreover, they seem to have been often led away by their love of beautiful women to

[10] There is some vagueness in the expression from sea to sea, inasmuch as latitude of both Brahmávarta and Brahmárshi on one side and of Bengal on the other, lies far to the northward of the sea-coast. But we must not expect much geographical precision from Manu as regards latitude. It is, however, still a question whether Bengal is to be included in Aryávarta, or whether we may assume that in ancient times the Bay extended sufficiently far to the northward to form an eastern boundary.

contract unions with the fair maidens of the newly-conquered territory, which were contrary to all Brahmanical rule. Therefore Manu promulgated his code for their edification, and especially directed that all men should learn their duties from those Bráhmans only who were born in Brahmárshi-desa, or within the Bráhman pale.

CHAPTER III

RISHIS AND BRAHMANS

THE distinction between the Vedic age and Brahmanic age has now been fully indicated, and will be further illustrated hereafter. The point to be established in the present chapter is the distinction between the Rishis, who composed the hymns of the Rig-Veda in the land of the seven rivers, and the Bráhmans of a later period, who performed sacrifices, and promulgated their complex code of rites and observances in the western quarter of Hindustan. In other words, between the joyous psalmists who poured out their souls in earnest and vigorous prayers to the Vedic deities for the material blessings of this world; and the gloomy race of priests, who promulgated the doctrines of religious austerities and future transmigration with especial reference to the life which is to come.

The composers of the hymns of the Rig-Veda appear to have had little faith in a life hereafter, in the immortality of the soul, or in a future state of rewards and punishments, beyond a vague conception of Yama as a god or judge of the dead. The Vedic Aryans also had some crude ideas, connected with the propitiation of the Pitris, or ghosts of deceased ancestors, with food and water; but this propitiation seems to have been only an expression of affectionate remembrance, and to have been scarcely connected with religious ideas. In a few of the hymns, which appear to be of comparatively later origin, ideas of a spiritual life after death may have found expression; but such lofty aspirations are not to be found in the compositions of the more popular and genial psalmists. On the contrary, the Vedic bards were endowed with a large capacity for worldly enjoyment, and a healthy and human appreciation of material good; and their hymns in general are the early expressions of a child-like belief in the individual existence of superior and spiritual beings in the elements, which could work either good or evil. The sun could ripen the harvest or burn it up; the rain could nourish the crops or destroy them; the wind could blow in gentle zephyrs or rush along the earth in hurricanes. The necessity for propitiating such beings was

therefore obvious. Accordingly the Vedic bard personified them into deities, and gratified them with offerings of strong drink and choice viands, and hymned them with praises as they were accustomed to hymn their own warriors and Rajas. Thus having feasted the gods and lauded them, the worshipper naturally expected in return such blessings as the gods had to bestow. Besides however the elementary deities, a host of other spiritual existences were personified into gods at the mere fancy of the imaginative bard. Heaven and earth, rivers, weapons, food, soma wine, the dawn, the sacrifice itself, and the priest who offered it, were alike invested with a spiritual life and converted into deities. The chief gods of all however were Indra and Agni, whose attributes have already been described; Indra as the type of sovereignty and conquest, the giver of rain, and sometimes the creator of the rivers and mountains; and Agni, as light or fire in all its varied manifestations, as the creative or vivifying spirit which animated the entire universe like a Supreme Soul.

It is perhaps difficult in a philosophic age to sympathize in the deep religious fervour with which the Aryan psalmists invoked such deities as those which have been described. But the natural selfishness which lies at the root of such religious enthusiasm, sufficiently explains the cause of the vitality of their devotion. So long as the people believed that material blessings were to be obtained by offerings of food and wine, and hymns of praise and prayer, so long they would continue to prepare the feast for the gods, and pour forth their souls in passionate laudation and supplication. The nature of the Vedic worship would also be specially acceptable to a convivial community; for its rites would be associated with every joyous gathering, if not with every family meal; and it would naturally be popular so long as the community believed that they could procure plenteous harvests, prolific cattle, abundance of sons, health, vigour, and long life, by the simple process of feasting and singing in the presence of their kind-hearted and generous deities. At the same time the genius of the bard would be stimulated to a pitch never reached by the poet of a more enlightened and incredulous age. Riches, fame, and glory would be the reward of that Rishi, who personified a new deity or composed a new hymn, if his poetical flights only reached the ears of the god, and procured earthly blessings for the congregation of worshippers. Sometimes a fair daughter

was given in marriage to a young and successful bard. Thus the legend has already been related of the Raja of Anga, who gave his daughter in marriage to a young Rishi, who brought down the rain after a long-continued drought. In like manner a legend has been preserved in the hymns of the Rig-Veda of another Raja, dwelling on the banks of the Sindhu or Indus, who gave ten daughters in marriage to a young psalmist named Kakshivat, together with rich dowries of cows, horses, and chariots.[1]

It thus seems impossible to identify these ancient Vedic bards or Rishis with the more modern Brahman priests. The hymns contain many references to priests or cooks, and some isolated allusions to Bráhmans; but the god Brahma scarcely ever appears to have been recognized or worshipped. Again, while some of the hymns comprise speculations about the soul, the relative priority of earth and heaven, and the creation of the universe, which is ascribed to Indra or Agni, there is no expression of Brahmanical ideas, and no reference to the creation of the universe by Brahmá. Judging therefore from the analogy furnished by Hebrew history, the hymns might be referred to a class of minstrels of whom king David was a type, rather than to a sacerdotal class. But there is an opposition in the hymns of the Rig-Veda between a peaceful community and a warlike community which might possibly indicate an opposition between the ancestors of the men who afterwards became Bráhmans and the ancestors of the men who afterwards became Kshatriyas. Such an opposition must be referred to a period long before the Aryans had crossed the Saraswati, and entered Brahmárshi-desa; and consequently long before the names of Bráhman and Kshatriya had applied to the priest and warrior castes.

The majority of the hymns of the Rig-Veda are the expression of a peaceful community, who offered simple oblations of

[1] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 126. There are several legends of a later date of Rajas giving their daughters in marriage to Bráhmans who are identified with Rishis ; but the stories appear to have passed through a Brahmanical crucible, for the husbands in such cases appear as decrepit old Bráhmans rather than as youthful Rishis. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Puranic authors to represent the young wives as loving and faithful under such circumstances, the idea is neither agreeable to poetical sentiment, nor to human nature, which finds a healthiier expression in such ballads as "Auld Robin Gray".

butter and milk to the deities of the elements, and other personified abstractions; and this class of priestly worshippers has been identified with the ancestors of the later Bráhmans. In like manner it has been seen that there are other hymns which appear to be the expression of a warlike class of the community; for they are connected with flesh sacrifices to Indra; and accordingly this class of worshippers has been identified with the ancestors of the later Kshatriyas. Traces are also to be found in these ancient hymns of an opposition between the worship of the Maruts, or winds, by a peaceful community, and the worship of Indra, as a hero, by a warlike community.[2] In one hymn Indra is represented as expostulating with the Maruts in the following language: "Where, Maruts, has that food been assigned to you, which was appropriated to me alone for the destruction of Ahi? For I indeed am fierce, and strong, and mighty, and have bowed down all my enemies with death-dealing shafts."[3] Again, Agastya the sage, who appears to have especially upheld the worship of the Maruts, expostulates with Indra thus: "Why, Indra, dost thou purpose to slay us? The Maruts are thy brethren! Share with them in peace; destroy us not in enmity."[4] In another hymn a worshipper thus expresses to the Maruts his alarm at the jealousy of Indra: "Maruts, through fear of that violent Indra, I fly trembling; the oblations that had been prepared for you have been put away; nevertheless have patience with us."[5] Indeed some of the hymns which are addressed to Indra are wholly of a warlike and triumphant character, like the Song of Miriam, or the Song of Barak and Deborah, and can scarcely be identified as belonging to a devotional psalmody. The potent god, the showerer of benefits, is invoked as the destroyer of the cities of the Dasyus, the conqueror of Sambara, the slayer of the black-skinned barbarians who gave him no libations, and who molested the white-complexioned Aryans, that were his friends and worshippers.

A further clue to the distinction between Rishis and Bráhmans seems to be furnished by the distinction laid down in the Puránas between Rájarshis, or king Rishis; Devarshis, or god

[2] See Wilson's Rig-Veda, vol. ii. pp. 145-162

[3] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 145, v. 6. Ahi is another name for Vrita, who is sometimes treated as a personification of the rain cloud, and sometimes as a Daitya or warrior amongst the aborigines.

[4] Ib. Hymn 170, v. 2.

[5] Ib. Hymn 171, v. 4.

Rishis; and Brahmarshis, or Bráhman sages. The king Rishis were probably Kshatriyas, who have always been designated Rajas. The god Rishis, termed Devarshis, or Rishis of the Devatas, were probably Rishis of the peaceful community, or rather of the Aryan race in general, who are often alluded to as Devatas, or gods. Finally, the term Brahmarshis was apparently applied to the early Bráhman sages; and hence their country was distinguished from the Aryan country, or the land of Devatas, by the term Brahmárshi-desa.[6]

The advent of the Bráhmans, and the establishment of their ascendancy as a great spiritual hierarchy, must have been the work of generations if not of centuries. Traces, however, are not wanting of the circumstances under which they rose. They first appeared among the Aryan community as mercenary priests, or sacrificers, who were prepared to officiate at the great festivals or sacrificial sessions for the sake of hire. Here it should be remarked that in the Vedic period the Kshatriyas were their own priests; the term priest being employed to indicate the performers of sacred rites, as distinct from the Rishis or composers of sacred songs. In other words, the Chiefs of a family, a tribe, or a Raj, appear occasionally as performers of a sacrifice, and even as celebrating the rites of marriage. Thus at the famous Aswamedha of Raja Yudhisthira, the horse was not sacrificed by a Bráhman, but by Bhima, the second Pándava; whilst the marriage rites of Nala and Damayanti were performed by the Raja of Vidarbha, and those of Ráma and Sita by the Raja of Mithila. Subsequently the Bráhmans were apparently hired by Rajas to perform the laborious ceremonies at the great sacrifices; and in this capacity they were regarded with disdain by the Kshatriyas. Thus the Kshatriyas at the Swayamvara of Draupadi expressed hot indignation that a Bráhman should have presumed to compete for the hand of the daughter of a Kshatriya; and Drupada and his son were much troubled at seeing Draupadi led away by Arjuna, who was disguised as a Bráhman. This implied inferiority of the Bráhman to the Kshatriya is the more extraordinary from the contrast which it furnishes to later myths of a Brahmanical origin, in which

[6] Compare *Vishnu Purána,* Book iv. chap. 3.

Rajas are represented as bestowing their own daughters in marriage upon Bráhmans.

The weapon by which the ancient Bráhmans appear to have established their ascendancy was that of asceticism. A religious enthusiast or fanatic, who leads a life of abstinence and mortification, and voluntarily subjects himself to privations and sufferings for the ostensible object of subduing his appetites and instincts, and elevating himself to the level of divine beings, will naturally excite the ridicule of an epicurean hierarchy, but he will also be regarded with veneration and superstitious awe by the wondering masses. Amongst a people like the Vedic Aryans, who were imbued with a strong and healthy appreciation of the material enjoyments of human life, the rise of such a sect of ascetics, with their wearisome ceremonial and ostentatious austerities, must have been regarded either with a credulous belief in the efficacy of such observances, or with a philosophical indifference and contempt for such self-denying fanaticism. Traces of this ignorant faith and scornful satire are alike to be found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. In one hymn, which appears to have been of Kshatriya origin, inasmuch as it was addressed to weapons and armour considered as deities, the worshippers are represented as saying : "May the Bráhmans, presenters of Soma, protect us." Here the Bráhmans appear as priests presenting the Soma to the sacrificial fire, as distinguished from the Rishi, or composer of the hymn, which is addressed to the Bráhmans. Moreover, the protection of the Bráhmans is invoked by the worshippers, apparently from a belief in their supernatural powers. Another hymn appears as an expression of sarcasm. Under the guise of a panegyric upon the frogs, it is in reality a satire upon the Bráhmans, their penances and elaborate rites; and it is somewhat remarkable that the hymn should be ascribed to a famous Rishi named Vasishtha, who has always been represented in the Epics and Puránas as a true Bráhman. The whole hymn has been exquisitely translated by Max Müller, and will be duly appreciated by those who have heard the demonstrative croaking of the Indian frogs on the approach of the rainy season. The following extracts will sufficiently indicate its character : "After lying prostrate for a year, like Bráhmans performing a vow, the frogs have emitted their voice, roused by the showers of heaven. When the

heavenly waters fall upon them as upon a dry fish lying in a pond, the music of the frogs comes together, like the lowing of the cows with their calves.......Like Bráhmans at the Soma sacrifice of Atirata, sitting round a full pond and talking, you, O frogs, celebrate this day of the year when the rainy season begins."[7] Another hymn translated by H. H. Wilson is more obscure, but seems to partake of the same satirical character.[8]

The results which may be drawn from the foregoing data appear to establish the conclusion, that in the old Vedic period there was a peaceful community and a warlike community; and that the former were inclined to the worship of the Maruts, whilst the latter were inclined to the worship of Indra. It accordingly follows that there were two classes of Rishis, who may be respectively referred to the same communities; namely, the domestic or family bards, who prayed for health and prosperity; and the warrior psalmists, who chanted triumphant war songs in honour of the victorious Indra. The opposition, however, between these two is only imperfectly indicated in the Vedic hymns; and it is difficult to say how far it may have originated the opposition between the Bráhman and the Kshatriya. But the opposition of the Bráhmans to the Kshatriyas finds full expression in the Vedic period. The penances of the Bráhmans were likened to the croaking of frogs by the Vedic Rishi Vasishtha; whilst the Bráhmans themselves were held in contempt as mercenary sacrificers by the ancient Rajas.

[7] Max Müller's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 494. "It is curious", says this eminent scholar, "to observe that the same animal should have been chosen by the Vedic satirists to represent the priests (Bráhmans), which was selected by the earliest satirist of Greece as the representative of the Homeric heroes."

[8] *Rig-Veda*, Mand. I. Hymn 179. This hymn contains a dialogue between Agastya and his wife, in which the latter seems to complain that her husband has neglected her in order to perform penance, contrary to the custom of the ancient Rishis. It has already been seen that Agastya appears in the Rig Veda as the representative of the peaceful community, who worshipped the Maruts in opposition to Indra.

CHAPTER IV

VEDIC AND BRAHMANIC CONCEPTIONS OF MANU

BEFORE proceeding to indicate the further distinction between the Vedic and Brahmanic ages, it will be necessary to distinguish between the Vedic conception of Manu as the first man, and the Brahmanic conception of Manu as the divine lawgiver.

The conception of Manu as the first man, the father of the Vedic Aryans, if not of the whole human race, finds sufficient expression in the hymns of the Rig-Veda.[1] Subsequently, in the Bráhmanic period he is said to have been warned by a fish to build a ship, in which he ultimately escaped from a great flood; a legend which bears a curious resemblance to the Mosaic tradition of Noah and the deluge.[2] From these circumstances the famous Brahmanical code has been ascribed to Manu, and is still known as the Institutes of Manu. This association of the name of the Vedic Manu with the Brahmanical code may have arisen from the desire to assert the remote antiquity and divine authority of Brahmanical law; but it may also have been deemed expedient to recommend that law to the worshippers of the Vedic deities, by referring its origin to the time-honoured progenitor of the Vedic Aryans.

The connection of the Vedic Manu with the Brahmanical law is accompanied by another significant fact, which has already been indicated. The so-called "Institutes of Manu" are the expression of an important compromise in the religious history of the Hindus; being, in fact, a compromise between the worship of the Vedic deities and the worship of the god Bráhma, between whom an opposition amounting almost to an antagonism seems at one time to have prevailed. The compilers of the code have certainly spared no pains to uphold the wor-

[1] Rig-Veda, I. Hymn 45, v. 1. Ib. Hymn 30, v. 16.

[2] A translation of the legend, as it is related in the *Satapatha-Bráhmana*, is given by Max Müller in his *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 425 Another version has been preserved in the Mahabhárata, in which Manu is said to have taken seeds of grain and vegetables into his ark, just as Noah is said to have taken pairs of animals.

ship of the god Bráhma above that of the Vedic deities; but at the same time they have found it necessary to recognize Vedic rites and institutions to an extent which imparts a two-fold character to a large portion of the code; one referring to the Vedic period, and the other to the Brahmanic period. At the same time, however, the compromise has evidently been carried out by Bráhmans, who have done their best, as in the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana, to Brahmanize every Vedic tradition.

The main object of the present chapter is to show that the opposition involved in this compromise, originated in the conflicting character of the authorities from which the so-called laws of Manu have been derived; and in order to carry out this object effectually, it will be necessary to indicate with sufficient clearness the character and scope of those authorities. Upon this point the compilers of the code have been most explicit. There are, it is said, four roots of the law, namely: 1st, The whole Veda. 2nd, The ordinances and practices of such as understand the Veda. 3rd, The immemorial customs of good men. 4th, The approval of conscience in matters which are indifferent.[3]

The first question for consideration in connection with the foregoing data, relates to the meaning which is to be attached to the term "Veda" as employed in the code of Manu. In reality there are four Vedas, corresponding to the four heads or faces of the god Brahma, who is popularly regarded as the divine author of the Vedas. But hitherto reference has only been made to the Rig-Veda, which is, however, the most ancient and important of the whole; and, indeed, the remaining three Vedas mainly depend upon the Rig-Veda, and may be regarded as Brahmanized versions of it, with later additions of a Brahmanical character.[4]

Again, each of the four Vedas is divided into two portions,

[3] Manu, ii. 6.

[4] The character of the four Vedas may be thus indicated : 1st, The Rig-Veda, which is the oldest, consists of metrical hymns addressed to different deities in the language of praise or laudation. 2nd, The Yajur-Veda, which chiefly consists of nearly the same hymns in prose, taking the form of prayers, and being in fact a collection of liturgical formulæ, especially relating to oblation and sacrifice. 3rd, The Sama-Veda, which consists of a re-cast or re-arrangement, of very nearly the same hymns, for the purpose of chanting. 4th, The Atharva-Veda, which, differing in some respects from the foregoing, consists of prayers, which are either employed as lustrations, or at rites intended to conciliate the deities, or as

namely: 1st, Mantras, or hymns and prayers, which appear to be the spontaneous outpourings of the devotions of a primitive people. 2nd, Bráhmanas, or formal rituals, in which hymns, prayers, sacrificial rites, and other mystic ceremonies, follow each other in established order; but they also include much explanatory matter of a mythical or theological character.

Hitherto reference has only been made to the Mantra portion of the Rig-Veda; inasmuch as the Bráhmana of that Veda does not appear to yield any results which can be regarded as historical.[5] The distinction however between an age of spontaneous devotion, and one of formal ritualism, is one of considerable historical significance, as the former seems to refer to the Vedic age and the latter to the Brahmanic age. The term Veda, as employed in Manu, thus seems to have generally included the whole of the Mantras and Bráhmanas of all the four Vedas;

imprecations upon enemies. It comprises, however, many of the hymns of the Rig-Veda. The foregoing description of the four Vedas refers only to what is called the Mantra portions, consisting of hymns, prayers and chants. But there is another and a later portion known as the Bráhmananam which is also included under the term "Veda", and which is sufficiently described in the text. Colebrooke's *Essays on the Veda* ; Wilson's *Introduction to the Rig-Veda.*

[5] Some account of the Bráhmana of each Veda is to be found in Colebrooke's *Essays* and Wilson's *Introduction to the Rig-Veda,* Vol. I. The most interesting and important is the Bráhmana of the Rig-Veda known as the Aitareya Bráhmana. The text of this Bráhmana, together with an English translation, has been recently furnished by Haug of Bombay. It furnshes valuable illustrations of what may be called the sacrificial phase of Bráhmanism, which has long been dying out in India, and which indeed has already died out in many provinces under British rule ; but it cannot be said to yield any results which can be rendered available for purely historical purposes. The following data, however, which are given on the authority of the learned translator, are worthy of notice.

The term Mantra, i.e. "the produce of thinking", is of a very early date, for it is to be found in the Zend-Avesta in the form of *Manthra.* Its meaning there is that of a sacred prayer or formula, to which a magical effect was ascribed ; just in the same manner that a similar effect was ascribed to the Vedic mantras. The Bráhmanam however is a later production, referring to the Mantra and based upon the Mantra ; and indeed without the Mantra it would have no meaning, nay, its very existence would be impossible. It contains speculations on the meaning of the Mantras, gives precepts for their application, relates stories of their origin in connection with that of sacrificial rites, and explains the secret meaning of the latter. It is in short a kind of primitive theology and philosophy

although three Vedas only are actually mentioned by Manu.[6] The term Bráhmana, however, is sometimes employed in a larger sense, and comprises a still later class of writings, which contain much metaphysical and mystical speculation respecting the Supreme Soul and the creation of the universe. These writings are termed Aranyakas and Upanishads, and are apparently included in the term Veda as employed by Manu; inasmuch as it will be seen hereafter that the Hindu lawgiver has borrowed some of the ideas which they convey in his account of the creation of the universe by Brahmá.

Besides the Veda thus defined, Manu indicates three other roots of law. He speaks of the ordinances and practices of those who understand the Veda ; and by this expression he either refers to the Bráhmanas, or dicta of Bráhmans, already described; or to the more ancient commentators upon the Vedas, the fathers of the Brahmanical religion, who might be supposed to interpret the more simple hymns of the Rig-Veda according to their own peculiar dogmas, and impart to the child-like ceremonial of the Vedic Aryans a mystic meaning never contemplated by the primitive Rishis on the banks of the Saraswati. He also speaks of the immemorial customs of good men; under which head he appears to include the usages of different countries, tribes, and families. To these he adds those acts, which refer to things indifferent, and which have received the approval of conscience. In this description of three roots of the law in addition to the Veda, may be found the full expression of that spirit of toleration and compromise which accounts for the spread and success of Brahmanism. The Bráhmans rarely attempted to ignore or denounce the traditions of any new people with whom they came in contact; but rather they converted such materials into vehicles for the promulgation of their peculiar tenets. In like manner they did not rashly attempt the suppression of immemorial customs, but they tolerated them; con-

of the Bráhmans. The name Bráhmanam is altogether unknown to the Zend-Avesta, and therefore must have originated after the migration of the Vedic Aryans from Central Asia, and probably after the advent of the Vedic Aryans in Hindustan. Haug's *Aitareya Bráhmanam*, vol. i. Intro.

[6] Manu mentions the *Rig-Veda*, which is held sacred to the gods ; the *Yajur-Veda*, which relates to mankind ; and the *Sáma-Veda*, which concerns the spirits of ancestors. Manu, iv. 124.

demning them however when opposed to their own ideas of morality, and leaving time to do the rest. This course must have greatly assisted in the promulgation of a new and foreign faith; inasmuch as a people will frequently cling to its time-honoured customs with a tenacity which is only increased by opposition, but which if left alone will gradually die out with the progress of enlightenment and refinement.[7]

Another point which Manu notices in connection with his code, is the distinction between Sruti, or revelation, and Smriti, or tradition; in other words, between the Veda which is regarded as a revelation, and what is called the whole body of the law, which is regarded as tradition.[8] This distinction may be of some importance as an illustration of the national belief in inspiration; and it may throw some light upon that era in the history of Sanskrit literature when inspiration was supposed to end and tradition to begin; but at present the question is somewhat obscure, and moreover furnishes no clue to the ancient condition of the people at large.[9] In connection with this subject Manu indulges in certain denunciations against those atheists who followed after heretical books, and threw contempt upon revelation and tradition, which appear to be of some historical significance, inasmuch as they were apparently directed against the Buddhists, who denied the authority of the Veda.[10]

But whilst the code of Manu is to be regarded as a compromise, it is emphatically the expression of Brahmanism, and the text book of the Bráhmans. It was the duty and privilege of every Bráhman to study it; and it was strictly enjoined that no one but a Bráhman should teach it to his pupils or disciples, and that no one but a member of the twice-born castes should be permitted to read it at all.[11] At the same time its authority was supreme, for it was regarded as a divine revelation from Manu, the son of Brahmá.

[7] It will be seen hereafter, that this toleration is fully illustrated by the laws of Manu as regards Gandharva and Rákshasa marriages, by which such marriages were permitted to the Kshatriyas, but still were condemned by the Hindu law-giver [8] Manu, ii, 10.

[9] The religious aspect of the question has been discussed by Müller and Goldstücker; in Müller's "History of Sanskrit Literature", and Goldstücker's "Panini, and his place in Sanskrit Literature." [10] Manu, ii. 11.

[11] Manu, i. 103.

CHAPTER V

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE BY MANU AND BRAHMA

THE Vedic idea of the creation of the universe, and the origin of the human race, seems to have been confused and obscure. Speculations on such subjects rarely belong to an age of primitive belief, when the first expression of philosophic inquiry would be satisfied with the simple dogmas that the earth was created by the gods, and that the traditionary ancestor of the tribe was the first man. Sometimes in the exaggerated language of poetry the Vedic bards ascribed the creation of the earth to Indra, or Agni; but they appear to have had no definite idea of a universe of being, or of the creation of a universe. Their homes were in the Punjab, and the Punjab was their little world. Accordingly, the child-like credulity of the masses readily acquiesced in the pious vauntings of the Vedic bard, that the seven rivers of the Punjab were brought down from the Himálayas by the god Indra, the ancient warrior and leader of the Aryan invaders; whilst the more thoughtful and inquiring minds might have been occasionally lost in that sea of metaphysical speculation, which ascribed the origin of life and being to the god Agni, or, in other words, to the element of fire in all its various forms and manifestations. The Vedic Aryans, however, appear to have arrived at some conception of the first man, who was known in the familiar phraseology of the hymns as father Manu; but even there Manu scarcely appears as a creator of the human race, but simply as the progenitor of men.[1]

There is, however, a Vedic hymn, known as the Purusha hymn, which is said to be a comparatively late composition, in which the gods and Rishis are supposed to offer up Purusha, or the Supreme Spirit, as a sacrifice, and to dismember him for the purpose of creating the earth out of his limbs.[2] This conception was apparently derived from an ancient myth, which also finds expression in the Scandinavian mythology; and it will be

[1] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 80, v. 16.

[2] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. i. chap. 1, sect. 2.

necessary to refer to it hereafter in connection with the origin of the four castes ; but it can scarcely be regarded as a definite Vedic idea of the origin and creation of a universe of being.[3]

The account of the creation which is given in the Brahmanical code is altogether of a different character from that which finds expression in the Vedic hymns. The age of Aryan conquest had been succeeded by an age of Brahmanical contemplation; and thus a theory of the origin of the universe was evolved out of the moral consciousness, which presents a curious combination of two opposite ideas, namely, the creative faculty of a Supreme Spirit, and the ordinary operation of physiological laws. The first idea bears a strong resemblance to the Mosaic cosmogony, and indicates four distinct stages in the creative process, viz.: 1st, The universe existing in darkness, or chaos. 2nd, The darkness dispelled by the light of the Supreme Spirit. 3rd, The creation of the waters by the light of the Supreme Spirit. 4th, The Supreme Spirit moving upon the waters.

The second idea resembles the Orphic cosmogony, and indicates five further stages in the creative process, viz.: 1st, The productive seed placed in the waters by the Supreme Spirit, and expanding into the mundane egg. 2nd, The birth of Brahmá in the egg. 3rd, The division of the egg and formation of the heavens and tthe earth. 4th, The creation of Mind and Consciousness, the three Moral qualities, the five Senses, and the great Elements. 5th, The creation of Manu and the ten Manus, from whom all the created things were produced.

Manu's account of the creation is as follows :

"In the beginning the universe only existed in darkness; upon which that Supreme Spirit, whom no man hath seen, whom no man can comprehend, and whom the mind alone can perceive, appeared with undiminished glory and dispelled the gloom. And the Supreme Spirit created the waters by his will, and placed in them a productive seed. And the seed became an egg as bright as gold and as luminous as the sun; and in that egg the Supreme Spirit was born in the form of Brahmá, the divine male, the

[3] When the sons of Bör had slain the great Ymir they dragged his body into the middle of Ginnungagap, and of it formed the earth. From Ymir's blood they made seas and waters ; from his flesh the land ; from his bones the mountains ; and his teeth and jaws served to make the stones and pebbles. Prose Edda, Part I, s. 8, Blackwell's Translation.

great forefather of all spirits. And the waters are called Nárá, because they were the production of Nárá, or the Supreme Spirit; and as it was on the waters that the Supreme Spirit first moved, he is named Náráyana, or he whose place of moving was the waters. And Brahmá sat in that egg during a whole year; and then he caused the egg to divide itself; and from the egg he framed the heavens and the earth and the great waters. From the Supreme Spirit emanated Mind and Consciousness; and all vital forms endued with the three Moral qualities of Goodness, Passion, and Darkness; and the five Perceptions of Sense, and the five Organs of Sensation; from which also proceed the great Elements, and their several Properties. Then Brahmá divided himself, and became half male and half female, and from that female he produced Viráj. Know that I (Manu) am that person whom the male Viráj produced by himself; and I, Manu, am the framer of all things. I created ten Manus, or Lords of created beings, and they produced all beings, vegetable and animal. When Brahmá awakes the universe expands; but when he sleeps the universe passes away."[4]

It will now be seen that the first four stages in the cosmogony of Manu, namely, darkness, light, water, and the Spirit moving on the water, present a remarkable similarity to those which appear in the Mosaic account; excepting that Manu seems to represent the light as existing before the waters, whilst the Mosaic account seems to imply that the waters were created first and the light afterwards. But the conception of the Supreme Spirit moving in or on the waters, demands a passing inquiry, inasmuch as it exhibits a radical difference between the working of the minds of the Hebrew and Hindu. The Mosaic account of the creation is as follows : "The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said : 'Let there be light', and there was light."[5] Here the term "Spirit" implies the breath of Deity; and the conception of

[4] Manu, i. 1—69. The translations from Manu, both here and elsewhere throughout the present work, are generally given in a condensed form, so as to avoid the repetitions and verbiage which are to be found in the original. A considerable amount of useless matter has also been often excluded altogether, as utterly devoid of either significance or interest.

[5] Genesis i. 2, 3.

the breath of life animating the waters can scarcely be said to run counter with an enlightened idea of creative force. But the Hindu conception is that of a Supreme Being reposing or sleeping upon the waters, creating the universe in idea only. This idea furnishes a striking illustration of the dreamy character of the Hindu intellect, but is altogether opposed to that notion of the wakeful and all-seeing energy of the Almighty, which is common to Hebrew and European thought. The conception of Brahmá sleeping upon the waters was naturally formed by a people, who consider rest and quietude beneath the shade of a tree, or by the side of still waters, to be the acme of bliss, and the proper sphere of devotional exercises. But an ardent and energetic race could no more imagine Deity to slumber than it could suppose the tides to stand still, or the monsoons to cease to blow.

The next conception in the order of creation is that of a productive seed, which is placed in the waters and expands until it becomes a vast and luminous egg, in which Brahmá is born, and from which the heavens and earth are created. This conception corresponds with the famous Orphic idea of a mundane egg, which appears to have been familiar to the Greeks.[6] In all probability it arose from a contemplation of the vault of heaven, which may be said to resemble the inside of the upper part of a vast egg; whilst the idea might be formed that the under part of the universe was arched over in a like fashion. It is, however,

[6] See the Orphic fragment in the "Birds" of Aristophanes quoted in Cory's Fragments. The extract is as follows :

"First was Chaos and Night, and black Erebus and vast Tartarus ;
And there was neither Earth, nor Air, nor Heaven; but in the boundless bosom of Erebus.
Night, with her black wings, first produced an ærial egg.
From which, at the completed time, sprang forth the lovely Eros,
Glittering with golden wings upon his back, like the swift whirlwinds,
But embracing the dark-winged Chaos in the vast Tartarus,
He begot our race (the birds) and first brought us to light,
The race of Immortals was not, till Eros mingled all things together :
But when the elements were mixed one with another, Heaven was produced, and Ocean,
And Earth, and the imperishable race of all the blessed Gods."

In the Comedy the Birds deliver the cosmogony, and thus claim the priority of birth over the gods as well as men. Birds sometimes play a curious part in Hindu legend. See especially the *Markandeya Purána.*

not impossible that the Hindu idea of the universe springing from an egg, may have had some connection with the conception of the Supreme Being as a primeval male which finds expression in the Puránas; but it may also have been associated with the worship of the Linga, or phallus, which apparently belongs to a period of remote antiquity.

The next stage in the cosmogony is of a metaphysical character, and has apparently been taken from the Sánkhya school of philosophy. It comprises the creation of Mind and Consciousness; the three Moral qualities; the perceptions of Sense and the Organs of Sensation; and the great Elements. This creation might perhaps be passed over in silence, as a bewildering jargon by which the later Bráhmans sought to account for the origin of existences, which could scarcely be ascribed to generative force.[7] Still it will be found of some value as illustrating the character and tone of the intellectual exercises of the later Bráhmans; and although perhaps it properly belongs to the period of Brahmanical revival, it may be desirable to furnish the following brief explanation, which is based upon the tedious disquisitions that appear in the later Puránas, and which may perhaps serve to throw a clearer light upon the obscure statement of Manu.[8]

This metaphysical creation may be considered under four different heads, viz.: 1st, The Mind or Consciousness. 2nd, The three Qualities—Goodness, Passion, and Darkness. 3rd, The Perceptions of Sense and Organs of Sensation. 4th, The Elements and their Properties.

The three Qualities or Gunas, which are comprised under the second head, should perhaps be considered first, as they are to a large extent mixed up with all the other creations. The con-

[7] The myths respecting Chronos, Eros, Chaos, and other ancient personifications, would seem to militate against this view; but it is difficult to conceive how a sexual origin could be ascribed to moral qualities, or to the organs of sense. In the later sectarian writings, connected with the pantheistic worship of Krishna such sensuous personifications certainly find a place; and the *Brahma Vaivarta Purána* contains a myth in which Brahma is represented as begetting upon his wife Savitri the science of logic, the modes of music, days, years and ages, religious rites, diseases, time and death. But this Purána would seem to be many centuries later than Manu.

[8] Compare particularly the *Vishnu Purána.*

ceptions of these three Gunas are larger than the names would seem to imply. Thus Goodness includes purity, and is attended with happiness and productive of virtue. Passion, or foulness, implies the idea of activity, whilst it is attended with misery and productive of vice. Darkness includes the idea of dulness, illusion, and obstructiveness, and is productive of solidity. These three Gunas hold an important place in the religious and philosophical ideas of a later age.

The creation of Mind or Conscioueness now proceeds as follows. Matter becomes invested with the three Gunas in equilibrio, and is united with Spirit. From these Intellect is produced, and like them is invested with the three Gunas. From Intellect proceeds Egotism, or the principle of individual existence which appropriates perceptions. Intellect and Egotism may be regarded as identical with Mind and Consciousness.[9]

The creation of the Perceptions of Sense, the five Organs of Sense, and the great Elements, is even more obscure. Egotism being invested with the three Gunas becomes threefold, namely; —Egotism pure, from the quality of Goodness; Egotism passionate, from the quality of passion or activity; and Egotism elementary, or rudimentary, from the quality of darkness.

1st,—Pure Egotism produced the ten divinities who preside over the five Organs of Sense, and their corresponding Perceptions or Actions. 2nd.—Passionate Egotism produced the Organs of Sense and their corresponding Perceptions. 3rd,—Rudimentary Egotism then produced the five Elements,—ether, wind, light, water, and earth; and their five Rudiments, or Properties,—sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell. In the first instance the rudiment of Sound was produced from Rudimentary Egotism, and then the remaining work of creation proceeded in the following order:

(1.) Ether was produced from Sound and engendered Touch; whence originated Wind, of which Touch is the property. (2.) Wind was produced from Touch and engendered Colour, or form; whence originated Light, of which Colour is the property.

[9] English equivalents for the Sanskrit terms are employed in the text to prevent confusion; but for the convenience of reference it may be as well to notice them here. Matter is called *Pradhana;* and sometimes *Prakriti,* or Nature. Spirit is called *Purusha.* Intellect is *Mahat.* Egotism is *Ahankara.*

(3.) Light, or fire, was produced from Colour and engendered Taste; whence originated water, including juices, of which Taste is the property. (4.) Water was produced from Taste and engendered Smell; whence originated Earth, of which Smell is the property. (5.) Earth thus originated from Smell, and was invested with Smell as a property.[10]

The next stage in the creation is the separation of Brahmá into male and female, and the production of Viráj, who thus appears to have become the progenitor of all created things. This myth scarcely calls for remark, but the one which immediately follows it, and which brings the whole narrative to a conclusion, demands consideration. Manu is introduced as being produced from Viráj by some creative process which is not distinctly indicated; and Manu then creates ten Manus, who appear in later myths as Bráhman sages. It would seem however that the narrative of the creation was previously complete without the introduction of Viráj; for when Brahmá had become separated into male and female, the creation by generation might have followed as easily as the generation of mankind followed the creation of Adam and Eve in the Mosaic narrative. The creation of Manu and the ten Manus thus appears to have been a separate and independent cosmogony, which has been incorporated with a Brahmanic cosmogony. In other words, the code contains two accounts of the creation of the human race; one being a Vedic tradition of Manu, as a progenitor; and the other being a later and Brahmanic dogma of the creation of the universe by Brahma.[11]

[10] Compare Manu, i. 74—78. According to the *Vishnu Purána* the egg included all these Elements and Properties, together with the Mind and Consciousness, the three Qualities, and the five Organs and their Perceptions.

[11] It is difficult to say how far this legend of ten Manus, and their ten reigns in succession, which are termed Manwantaras, finds expression in the Vedic hymns. Indeed the point has yet to be determined. (See Wilson's Rig-Veda, Vol. II, p. 61 *note*). The names of the Manus are as follows : Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Daksha, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, and Nárada. Most of the names are to be found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda ; and all of them figure largely in those Brahmanical editions to the Epics to which attention has already been drawn. Marichi was the father of the famous Kasyapa, who appears in the Rámáyana as the mythical progenitor of the Sun, and consequently as the Brahmanical ancestor of the Solar race of Ayodhyá. Atri appears in like manner in the Mahábhárata as the mythical progenitor of the Moon, and

consequently as the Brahmanical ancestor of the Lunar race of Bharata. Angiras is an ancient personification of the Vedic deity Agni in the person of a Bráhman. Pulastya was the mythical grandfather of Rávana, the Rákshasa Raja of Lanká. Palaha, Kratu, and Daksha are more obscure personifications; but the latter is celebrated as the performer of a famous sacrifice, in which he appears as an opponent of the god Siva. Vasishtha appears prominently in the Rámáyana as the priest of Maharaja Dasaratha, and religious instructor of the hero Rama. Bhrigu is frequently introduced into the Mahábhárata for the purpose of delivering many Brahmanical discourses. Lastly, Nárada is found playing an important but equally mythical part in both Epics. He settled the delicate terms on which Draupadi was to live with her five husbands; he was present with other Rishis at the mythical Council of the Kauravas, which was summoned to receive Krishna; he was one of the three Rishis who pronounced the curse against the Yadavas, which culminated in the massacre at Prabhása and destruction of Dwárká; and he even appears in the beautiful episode of Nala and Damayanti, as carrying the news of the Swayamvara of Damayanti, to the heaven of Indra.

In another part of the code there is incorporated a still more obscure tradition of Manu, under the name of Swáyambhuva, having six descendants who are also termed Manus, (Manu, i. 61—63.) The names of these seven Manus are Swáyambhuva, Svárochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Khakshusha and Vaivaswata. As Vaivaswata is said to have been a child of the Sun, this account may be connected with some solar myth. It is worthy of remark that this latter account forms the commencement of that part of the code in which Manu delegates the further recitation of the laws to his son Bhrigu. These lists are differently filled up in the later Puránas.

CHAPTER VI

SACRED CHRONOLCGY

THE account of the creation of the universe is followed in the Brahmanical code by a description of those extraordinary durations of time, by which the ancient sages boldly attempted to map out eternity; and which excited so much discussion in the last century from the marked contrast which they present to the more limited calculations which are based upon the so-called Mosaic chronology. This daring reckoning includes millions of years before the dawn of recorded history, and millions of years yet to come; and under such circumstances it might seem to possess some germs of truth from its approximation to those vast astronomical periods, which are indicated by the apparent infinity of the universe, and the revolutions of distant stars round mysterious centres. But in truth it is a mere arbitrary arrangement of figures; a play upon the relations of days, months, and years, multiplied by thousands of millions at the mere fancy of an arithmetical dreamer. Such a chronological scheme is of course childish and unmeaning; but yet it has exercised considerable influence upon the religious belief of the Hindus.

Manu's system of chronology may be separately considered under two different heads, as follows:

1st, The calculation of days, months, and years. 2nd, The calculation of Yugas or Ages.

The calculation of days, months, and years all turns upon the systematic multiplication of the ordinary human notion of a day, that is, of a single revolution of the earth upon its own axis. The Hindu day thus corresponds to the European day, but its subdivisions are different. The Hindu hour or muhurtta consists of forty-eight minutes only, and thus there are thirty hours in the day instead of twenty-four. The minimum of time is the twinkling of an eye. Eighteen twinklings of an eye make a moment, or káshthá; thirty moments make a kalá, which consists of about a minute and a half; and thirty kalás make a muhurtta, or hour. Thus there are about half a million of twinklings of the eye in every Hindu hour. The conceptions of days,

months, and years are naturally formed from the revolution of the earth upon its axis, the revolution of the moon round the earth, and the path of the sun along the ecliptic. But four different kinds of days are specified in the code; and this arbitrary division seems to have been introduced for one significant purpose, namely, the exaltation of the god Brahmá both over the Vedic deities, and over the Pitris,[1] or spirits of deceased ancestors, who were also worshipped by the Vedic Aryans. These four days were as follows:

1st,—A day of Mortals, which is divided into day and night by the rising and the setting of the sun; the day being set apart for mortal action and the night for mortal slumber. 2nd,—A day of Pitris, which lasts for a lunar month; being divided into the bright fortnight which is called day, and the dark fortnight which is called night; the day beginning with the new moon, and the night with the full moon.[2] 3rd,—A day of the Vedic gods, or Devatas, which lasts for a solar year; being divided into the summer half which is called day, and the winter half which is called night; the day beginning with the vernal equinox and the night with the autumnal equinox. 4th,—A day of Brahmá, which involves some large calculations connected with the Yugas or ages, and will therefore be considered separately hereafter.[3]

This system of days, months, and years, is followed by a calculation of Yugas or ages. The primary object, of the code, namely, the exaltation of the worship of Brahmá as the creator of the universe, thus appears abundantly manifest. The contemplative spirit and astronomical knowledge of the Bráhmans impelled them in the first instance to consider the universe as enduring for myriads of years; and at a subsequent period their religious tendencies seem to have led them to represent the duration of the universe as only equivalnt to a single day of Brahmá.

The original idea of the Yugas or ages was that there were

[1] The worship of the Pitris, or ancestors, still forms an important element in the Hindu religion, and will be found elucidated in chap. ix.

[2] According to Kulluka's gloss (Manu, i. 63), the Pitris inhabited the moon. According however to the Vishnu Purána, the Pitris had a heaven of their own which was called Prajápati Loka. The division of the lunar month into a bright and a dark fortnight will appear strange, until it is remembered that after the new moon the evenings become rapidly lighter, and that after the full moon they become rapidly darker.

[3] Manu, i. 63 *et seq.*

four Yugas succeeding each other in a descending series of arithmetical deterioration as 4, 3, 2, and 1, each of which was multiplied by a thusand. These four Yugas were respectively named Krita (? Sattva), Tretá, Dwápara, and Kali. Thus the first, or Krita Yuga, lasted for 4000 years ; the second or Tretá Yuga, lasted for 3000 years; the third, or Dwápara Yuga, lasted for 2000 years; and the fourth, or Kali Yuga, lasted for 1000 years. But all these years were years of the gods, each of which consisted of 360 mortal years. The aggregate was called a Mahá Yuga, or great age; and a thousand Mahá Yugas formed a Kalpa, or a day of Brahmá.[4]

The four Yugas thus represented the units 4, 3, 2, and 1 in arithmetical descent multiplied by a thousand. But in addition to these thousands of years, each Yuga has two twilights, one preceding it and the other following it; and each of these twilights consists of the same series of 4, 3, 2, and 1, but multiplied by a hundred only. Again, these years of the gods have each to be multiplied by 360, in order to reduce them to mortal years. The following table will perhaps exhibit with sufficient clearness the calculations connected with the number of years of the Vedic gods which are included in each Yuga :

	Years of the Gods.	
1st Yuga		
Twilight	400	
Krita Yuga	4,000	
Twilight	400	
	———	4,800
2nd Yuga.		
Twilight	300	
Tretá Yuga	3,000	
Twilight	300	
	———	3,600
3rd Yuga.		
Twilight	200	
Dwápara Yuga	2,000	
Twilight	200	
	———	2,400

[4] Manu, i. 69 *et seq.*

4TH YUGA.

Twilight	100	
Kali Yuga	1,000	
Twilight	100	
		1,200
Total comprising a Mahá Yuga ...		12,000

One thousand Mahá Yugas form a Kalpa, or a day of Brahmá, or twelve millions of years of the gods, which may be converted into mortal years thus :

$$12,000,000 \times 360 = 4,320,000,000.$$

Here the imagination can scarcely follow the arithmetic, for even this period must be doubled. Whilst the creative energy of Brahmá lasts for one day, his slumber lasts for a whole night, and the night of Brahmá is equal in duration to his day. Thus a day and night of Brahmá extends over nearly ten thousand million of years. This sum total must again be multiplied to an almost infinite extent, for the year of Brahmá comprises three hundred and sixty of his days and nights; and he is said to live for a hundred years. In later Puránas he is described as immortal.

The simplicity of the idea which represents the universe as only lasting for a day will now be manifest. Brahmá is sleeping on the ocean. He awakes in the morning, and the universe springs into existence and endures throughout the day. He slumbers in the evening, and the universe passes away and all is darkness and chaos, until the night is over and he awakes and recreates as before. Thus the day of Brahmá is the period during which his creative power is in full activity. The night of Brahmá is the period during which his creative power is in perfect repose.[5]

The significance of this daring attempt to reduce eternity to a system of chronology will be readily apprehended by bringing it face to face with western ideas. In Europe the popular idea of the period of time, which separates the creation of the universe from our own generation, scarcely extends over six

[5] In the age of Brahmanical revival this conception of the creation by Brahmá underwent a further change, in order to bring it into harmony with the modern doctrine of a Hindu trinity consisting of Brahmá, Vishnu, and Siva.

thousand years; and according to a Rabbinical dogma, which prevailed very generally until a comparatively recent period, the six thousand years were to be followed by a millennium, or sabbath, of one thousand years, after which the universe was to be brought to a close and time was to be no more. This Rabbinical theory has perhaps yielded somewhat to the advance of natural science, but still it has left a deep impression upon the religious belief of western nations. In India, on the other hand, the idea of time has been altogether untrammelled by any restricted system of chronology; and material existence has been regarded as practically eternal. The result has been the universal spread of dogmas such as the endless transmigrations of the soul, the successive incarnations of deity separated from each other by vast intervals of time, and a chain of Buddhas stretching far back into a remote past, which can only be indicated by a long line of numerals and ciphers. Thus amongst western nations, which have been brought under the influence of a religious belief in a more restricted chronology, the mind of man is perpetually turned upon his material life as the alpha and omega of his own present existence, and as the period upon which depends the salvation of his soul throughout an undefined eternity of spiritual being. But amongst the Hindus the imagination is in a great measure weaned away from a consideration of the individual life, and is lost in a dreamy contemplation of an infinity of future existences in which the present life is but as a mortal day.

The foregoing system of Hindu sacred chronology may be called the Bráhmanic system; and by laying down a distinction between the day of the Devatas and the day of Brahmá, it furnishes additional proof that the worship of Brahmá overlaid the more primitive worship of the Vedic Aryans. But besides this mapping out of eternity by Kalpas, or days of Brahmá, there is a recognition in the code of another system of chronology based upon Manwantaras, or reigns of successive Manus. Whether the second system was handed down from the Vedic age, or sprung up during the transition period between the Vedic and Brahmanic ages, must for the present remain a question.[6] That it was independent of the Brahmanic system is evident from the abortive efforts which are made to reconcile the duration of

[6] See Wilson's *Rig-Veda,* vol. ii. p. 61 *note.*

the Kalpas with the duration of the Manwantaras. Manu does indeed say that seventy-one Mahá Yugas consitute a Manwantara ;[7] but in the Puránas it is stated that fourteen Manwantaras, with some additional years, are equal to a day of Brahmá; and the necessity for such additional years sufficiently indicates that the two computations are independent of each other.

[7] Manu, i. 79, 80.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION OF THE BRAHMANS

THE simple religious ideas connected with the Vedic worship have already been indicated. It will now be necessary to unfold and explain the religious system which finds expression in the Institutes of Manu. In attempting this task, two objects will be kept in view, namely: 1st, To exhibit the religious development which accompanied the rise of Brahmanism and establishment of the Barhmanical ascendancy. 2nd, To illustrate the compromise which was effected between the worship of the Vedic deities and the worship of Brahma.

Before, however, entering upon this branch of inquiry, it will be necessary to consider the doctrine of rewards and punishments, both in this life and in a series of lives, or transmigrations, hereafter, by which the Bráhmans endeavoured to enforce their particular tenets. This dogma found little or no expression in the hymns of the the Rig-Veda, beyond what was involved in a conception of Yama, as god or judge of the dead; and indeed it could scarcely have been necessary to enforce the spontaneous worship of the Vedic deities by the same promises and threats, which were requisite to insure the observance of new and artificial rules introduced by a priestly hierarchy. In primitive times, when fathers of families and heads of tribes performed their own religious rites without the interference of priests, they were actuated by an unquestioning faith, which to them was as old as the hills, that they would thereby obtain from their gods the material blessings of this life; and that if they did not so propitiate the deities of the elements with hymns and sacrifices, their harvests would fail, their cattle would perish, their wives would bear no sons, and their own bodily health and vigour would pass away. Under such circumstances religious indifference or apathy must have been unknown. On the contrary, there was most likely a display of warmth and fervour, which could scarcely be expected in more artificial and complex devotions, and which indeed characterize the greater portion of the Vedic hymns which were sung on the banks of the Saraswati. Moreover the conception

of sin must have been singularly crude in the Vedic period. A deity might be offended by the poverty of the worship, such as inferiority in the cakes, butter, or wine, or imperfections in the hymns of praise. But the consciousness of having offended deity by the breach of some arbitrary moral rule seems to have been rarely experienced by this genial race, who rather exulted in pleasures and gratifications which were an abomination to the Bráhmans. It was however amongst such a community that the Bráhmans promulgated their religious rites and moral rules, which must have been often unintelligible or repugnant to the masses. The Vedic Aryans were distinguished by a love of wine and women, of flesh meat and high play, which were radically opposed to the tenets of asceticism; and it was apparently on this account that the Bráhmans found it necessary to enforce their precepts by promises of punishment, which were unknown to the composers of the hymns of the Rig-Veda.

This theory of future rewards and punishments lies at the root of all Brahmanical laws and observances, and was accepted by the authors of the code as an established dogma; and indeed it has prevailed amongst the people of India down to the present day. Almost every act, however trivial, is considered as a merit or a demerit; and the individual is rewarded or punished hereafter according to the sum of his merits and demerits.[1] In this belief there is not the slightest vagueness or ambiguity ; for besides the threats and promsies which refer to the present life, it is associated with the doctrine of transmigration of the soul through a vast number of existences on earth, and the occasional departure of the soul to a heaven or a hell for periods of different duration. It is assumed that in all cases the balance is rigidly drawn. If the merits exceed the demerits, the individual will be rewarded in

[1] "The householder should collect virtue [*i.e.* merits] by degrees, in order that he may obtain a companion to the next world, as the white ant by degrees builds his nest; for in his passage to the next world, neither his father, nor his mother, nor his wife, nor his son, nor his kinsmen, will remain in his company, but he will be accompanied by his merits alone. Single is each man born; single he dies; single he receives the reward of his good deeds, and single the punishment of his evil deeds. When he leaves his corpse, like a log or a lump of clay, his kinsmen retire with continually, and by degrees, collect merits, so that he may secure for averted faces; but his merits accompany his soul. Let a man therefore himself an inseparable companion; and, with his merits for his guide, he will traverse a gloom which is hard to be traversed."—Manu, iv. 223—242.

proportion to the balance in his favour; either by noble birth, prosperity, comeliness, physical strength, intellectual power, long life, or abundance of sons in future transmigrations; or by elevation to a heaven, where the soul would dwell in bliss until its merits were sufficiently rewarded, after which it would return to earth and pass through another series of transmigrations. In like manner, if the demerits exceed the merits, the individual will be punished in proportion to the balance against him; either by low birth as a degraded man or inferior animal, or by adversity, deformity, physical weakness, mental incapacity, premature death, or a family of daughters; or by being cast down to one of the many hells, there to remain until the balance of demerits was wiped away, after which it would return to earth to pass through another series of existences.

The difference between the religious obligations which are felt in Europe and those which are felt in India, may now be easily apprehended. In Europe the fear of the Divine displeasure, either in this world or the next, undoubtedly exercises a considerable influence; especially upon those who are sincerely desirous of bringing every action of their lives into strict conformity with what is understood to be the Divine will. But not even the fear of eternal punishment will restrain the mass of the people from the commission of acts, which they themselves believe to be directly opposed to the dictates of religion and morality. Moreover there is a popular belief in the mercy of God towards his erring creatures, in the efficacy of repentuance, and in the general forgiveness of all minor offences, that exercises a counter-influence to the doctrine of eternal punishment, which no amount of religious teaching seems calculated to remove. In India, on the other hand, the anxiety of the individual is concentrated more or less upon every action of his life; for nearly every act that can be committed may serve to outweigh a merit or wipe away a demerit, and thus insure good fortune, or bring about misfortune, either in this life or in a future existence. There is no prospect of the Divine forgiveness of sins in the event of repentance on the part of the sinner, and no belief in an atonement, excepting by means of sacrifices and penances which may be regarded as so many additional merits placed to the credit of the individual. Meantime religious worship and austerities are generally regarded as the chief merits; whilst the prominent de-

merits are supposed to consist in the breach of caste observances and in indulgences in forbidden things. By such arch-merits individuals might escape from transmigration altogether, and enjoy a happy eternity in heaven; whilst by such arch-demerits individuals might be doomed to endless transmigrations in the lowest scale of existences, or endure a horrible eternity in hell.

This conception of a future state of rewards and punishments, although it involves no idea of a beneficent and merciful deity, contains an element of apparent justice, which is readily apprehended by the popular mind. Moreover it serves to account for one of the most inscrutable problems in human life, namely, the unequal distribution of the blessings and pains of earthly existence. Happiness and prosperity are regarded as the reward of virtues displayed in a previous life; and misery and adversity are regarded as the punishment of sins committed in a previous state of being.

Again, the compilers of the code are by no means unmindful of the force of that obligation, which is involved in promises of rewards or punishments to the posterity of an individual; and which finds a fitting and forcible expression in the Mosaic law. In Manu however the obligation generally refers to breaches of mere caste rules, which could only affect posterity so long as the caste system continues to trammel the minds and bodies of the people of India. But the Hebrew lawgiver has laid down the far grander dogma, which may be opposed to a human idea of justice, but which nevertheless involves an eternal truth that may be traced back to the creation of man. He has authoritatively declared that the iniquity of fathers will be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation; and this doctrine is not only in accordance with the existing facts that many of the crimes of parents do affect their children in the eyes of the world, but it is also in conformity with what is known of hereditary disease.[2] Indeed, in a future age, when the laws of physiology are more generally apprehended, the obligations to obey the moral law for the benefit of posterity will increase in strength; and the justice of a punishment which is inflicted upon

[2] A similar conception finds expression in the New Testament narrative in the story of a man who was born blind. The Jews asked Jesus whether it was the sin of the man in a previous life, or the sin of his parents, which had caused his blindness.

the descendants of a delinquent, as well as upon himself, will become more and more manifest in the eyes of men.

Turning from this general element in Hindu belief to the special observations of Manu as regards his code, it will be seen that he raises another question, which is popularly supposed to have originated in comparatively modern thought, but which yet appears to have formed a subject of discussion from the day when the theory of a future state of rewards and punishments was first mooted amongst mankind. That a good man should receive some reward for a virtuous life was no doubt an ancient idea; and so long as goodness consisted in the fulfilment of all the duties of a son, a husband, a father, and a good citizen, such a claim to reward would probably remain unchallenged. But when the natural law became amplified and modified by ecclesiastical law, and goodness consisted in a great mesure in the performance of rites and ceremonies, alms-giving and penances, which may have possessed a religious meaning but which were certainly devoid of moral significance, the question naturally arose as to the motive which led to the fulfilment of duty; whether such a duty was performed from a sense of right, or from the hope of reward; and whether the motive in one case was more praiseworthy than in the other. This question is raised by Manu, but he does not attempt to discuss it; and indeed such a discussion can scarcely lead to a practical result, inasmuch as it deals with what passes in the minds of other men, of which we can have no consciousness, and of which we can otherwise know nothing, excepting from inferences drawn from our experience of the motives by which we ourselves may have been actuated under like circumstances.[3] Manu simply states what appears to be the bare fact, namely, that whilst the fulfilment of duty for the sake of reward is not a praiseworthy motive, man will not perform any duty,

[3] The assumpion of inferior motives has been carried to a vicious extent in India, and has done much towards exciting that suspicious feeling with which Hindus at the Presidency capitals but too often regard Europeans in their social capacity. The ostentatious charity, the public subscription lists, and the testamentary endownments which are so common in England, are often ignored, whilst the charitable acts of wealthy Hindus, especially in the construction of tanks, ghats, and resting-places, and the feeding of the poor and afflicted, are but too frequently ascribed to the mere love of fame and applause, rather than charitably attributed to a higher motive of real benevolence towards the human race at large.

such as sacrifice, religious austerities, or abstinence from sin, excepting in the hope of reward. As a solution of the difficulty, which will reconcile it with the popular idea, Manu enunciates a new dogma. Assuming that the fulfilment of religious duty will be always rewarded to some extent whatever may be the motive, he says that if a man fulfils his duties without regard to the rewards which follow the fulfilment, he will enjoy the highest happiness in this life and eternal happiness hereafter.

Before however considering the daily worship enjoined by Manu, it will be advisable to glance at the Hindu conception of the god Brahma, from whom the Brahmans appear to have derived their name. Here a distinction must be laid down between Brahma, the Supreme Spirit, and Brahma, the creator of the uniserse, or creative energy of Brahmá. The god Brahmá is generally represented with four heads, as the divine author or inspirer of the four Vedas; but this representation must be of comparatively recent origin. Manu, who upholds the worship of both Brahma and Brahmá, speaks only of three Vedas.[4] Again, Kulluka explains that in one Kalpa, or previous age, the Vedas proceeded from Fire, Air, and the Sun; and that in another Kalpa they proceeded from Brahmá.[5] Here a glimpse is obtained of the supersession of Vedic ideas by Brahmanic ideas, of which abundant proofs appear elsewhere. It is however a curious circumstance worthy of note, that notwithstanding the efforts of the Brahmanical compilers of the code of Manu to exalt the monotheistic conception of Brahma as the God of gods, the worship of this deity has never been popular with the people of India, who have ever hankered after their old Vedic personifications. The consequence has been that the Bráhmans have long abandoned the worship of the god from whom they obtained their distinctive name; and it will be seen hereafter that, in the age of Brahmanical revival, they actually set up Vishnu and Siva as superior to Brahma.

With these preliminary observations it will now be necessary to review the daily ritual which is laid down in the Institutes of Manu. It must be remarked in the first instance, that such worship was to be performed every day, and was apparently con-

[4] Manu, iv. 124.

[5] Kulluka, quoted in Colebrooke's *Essay on the Vedas.*

fined to the three twice-born castes, namely, the Bráhman, the Kshatriya, and the Vaisya. This worship may be considered under two heads, namely, invocations and sacramental rites.

The daily invocations laid down in the ritual of Manu, are involved in some obscurity, but on a critical examination will be found to yield results of considerable importance in the history of ancient India. They furnish a significant illustration of the process by which the old Vedic religion was moulded into Brahmanical forms of thought, until the polytheistic worship of the gods of the elements was resolved into the monotheistic worship of Brahma or Brahmá. They comprise certain mystic combinations of Three in One, which however bear no resemblance whatever to the Christian conception of a Trinity. These combinations are four in number, consisting of three suppressions of the breath, three letters, three words, and three measures. Each of these combinations may now be considered separately, as follows: 1st, The three suppressions of the breath, each being equal in time to five short vowels, which are to be made with the mind fixed on Brahma, the Supreme Being. These suppressions are said by Manu to be the highest devotion. 2nd, The letters A, U, and M, which form the word Aum, pronounced Om. This word is said by Manu to be the symbol of Brahma, or lord of creatures. 3rd, The three words—Earth, Sky, and Heaven, Bhuh, Bhuvar, Swar—which are collectively termed the Vyáhritis. 4th, The three measures included in the sacred verse known as the Gáyatri which could only be uttered by the twice-born.[6]

The inquiry into the origin of these combinations of Three in One, naturally separates itself into two questions, viz: First, what were were the "Three" who were to be combined into "One"? Secondly, who was the "One" into whom the "Three" were resolved?

For the sake of clearness it may be advisable in the first instance to state the conclusions; and then to indicate the data by which those conclusions appear to be proved. The conclusions to be established hereafter are, that the "Three" comprised the deities of the Vedas; and that the "One" referred either to Brahmá, the creator of the universe, or to Brahma, the Supreme Soul.

[6] Manu, ii. 74—84.

As regards the three suppressions of breath, which formed as it were the preliminary of the devotions, nothing need be said. Their significance can be gathered from what follows. It will be sufficient to observe that during their performance the mind of the worshipper was to be fixed upon Brahma as the Supreme Soul.

As regards the three letters A, U, and M, little can be gathered, excepting that when brought together into the word Aum they are said by Manu to form a symbol of the Lord of created beings—Brahma. According, however, to the Nirukta, which is an ancient glossary of the Vedas, the syllable Aum (Om) refers to every deity.

As regards the three words—Bhuh, Bhuvar, Swar, or Earth, Sky, Heaven—more positive data can be inferred. The respective deities of these three localities were Fire, Air, and the Sun; or Agni, Vayu, and Surya. These three are among the oldest deities of the Rig-Veda. It also appears from the Nirukta that all the Vedic deities were resolvable into these three—Fire, Air, and the Sun; and it is twice asserted that there are but three gods. Further, it is distincly stated in the Nirukta, as well as in the Brahmana, that these three gods were considered as one.[7] From

[7] The references to the Nirukta may be found in the following extract from Colebrooke : "The deities invoked appear, on a cursory inspection of the Rig-Veda, to be as various as the authors of the prayers addressed to them; but, according to the most ancient annotations on the Indian scripture, those numerous names of persons and things are all resolvable into different titles of three deities, and ultimately of one God. The Nighánti, or glossary of the Vedas, concludes with three lists of names of deities : the first comprising such as are deemed synonymous with fire, the second with air, and the third with the sun. In the last part of the Nirukta which entirely relates to deites, it is twice asserted that there are but three gods. The further inference, that these intend but one deity, is supported by many passages in the Veda; and is very clearly and concisely stated in the beginning of the index to the Rig-Veda, on the authority of the Nirukta and of the Veda itself :

"The deities are only three : whose places are, the earth, the intermediate region, and heaven : [namely] fire, air, and the sun. They are pronounced to be the deities of the mysterious names [i.e. bhuh, bhuvar, and swar] severally ; and (Prajapati) the lord of creatures is [the deity] of them collectively. The syllable Om intends every deity : it belongs to (Paraméshthi) him who dwells in the supreme abode ; it appertains to (Brahma) the vast one ; to (Déva), God, to (Adhyátmá) the superintending Soul. Other deities belonging to those several regions are portions of the [three] gods ; for they are variously named and described, on account of

these data it may be inferred that in the Brahmanic age, or in the transition period between the Vedic and Brahmanic age, the Vedic gods were classified under three heads and resolved into their original elements; and that in this manner the Vedic deities, although frequently and separately invoked in a ritual which was essentially a compromise, were stripped of their ancient theological significance, and rendered subordinate to the worship of Brahmá as the creator of the elements, or to the still higher and more spiritual worship of Brahma, or the Supreme Soul.

The three measures which form the celebrated text known as the Gáyatri, throw a still further light upon this Bráhmanizing process. The tendency towards monotheism is clearly marked in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, which are free from all reference to Brahmanism, and which are the expression of a religions faith that appears to have been long anterior to the advent of the Bráhmans. But whilst it can scarcely be asserted that one Deity was specially considered as superior to all the others as the God of gods, it is certain that attributes of a spiritual and divine character were especially awarded to Surya or the Sun. Indra, indeed, stands prominently forward as the god of the firmament and sovereign of the Devatas; but the Sun seems to have had a higher rank as an ethical conception, for he was the illuminator of the universe and enlightener of men's minds. In the transition period to which attention has been drawn, the Vedic tendency to regard the Sun as a Supreme Being was developed still further in the direction of monotheism by a Bráhmanical tendency to identify the Sun with the Supreme Soul, or Bráhma. This theological process will be sufficiently apprehended by comparing the primitive text of the Gáyatri as it appears in the Rig-Veda, with the interpretations of later commentators. A literal translation of the Gáyatri is thus given by H. H. Wilson :

their different operations ; but [in fact] there is only one deity, the Great Soul (Mahán átma). He is called the sun ; for he is the soul of all beings : [and] that is declared by the sage : 'The sun is the soul of that which moves, and of that which is fixed'. Other deities are portions of him : and that is expressly declared by the text : 'The wise call fire, INDRA, MITRA, and VARUNA'."

"This passage", says Colebrooke, "is partly abridged from the Nirukta and partly taken from the Bráhmana of the Veda."

"We meditate on that desirable light of the Divine Sávitri (the Sun), who influences our holy rites."[8]

Here the simple meaning appears to be that the worshipper desired to meditate upon the Sun, who caused or enabled him to offer oblations; or, as Wilson remarks, the last words may be rendered "who may animate, or enlighten, our intellects."[9] The later Hindu commentators seem to be agreed in understanding Sávitri to signify the soul as identical with the Supreme Soul of the universe, or Brahmá.[10] This interpretation finds full expression in Jones's paraphrastic translation, which is as follows :

"Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, re-creates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat."

If this paraphrase be analysed it will be seen to comprise several distinct conceptions. First and foremost is the worship of the Sun as the Supreme Deity; next, the worship of the Sun as the Godhead, or Brahma; and lastly, the worship of the Sun as the illuminator and enlightener of the universe, physically as well as spiritually. Here, again, may be perceived the same current of thought which flows through the combination of the three letters—A, U, and M; the three words—Earth, Sky, and Heaven; and the three suppressions of breath with the mind fixed on Brahma. The Sun may be regarded as the type of all the Vedic deities, who is again resolved into the later conception of Brahma.

By bringing together the different points in these four combinations the religious significance of the devotional form may be sufficiently apprehended. First of all the worshipper made three suppressions of his breath, which may perhaps be regarded as symbolical of the three classes of spiritual and deified evistences, which were comprised in the conception of Brahma as the Supreme Soul. Next follows the mystic "Aum", which apparently comprises all the Vedic deities in one word. Then the

[8] Wilson's Rig-Veda, vol. ii. p. 110. [9] Ib. p. iii, note.

[10] Sáyana considers the passage to admit of two interpretations, namely, the light, or "Brahma, constituting the splendour of the Supreme Ruler, or creator of the universe;" or "the light or orb of the splendid sun." Sáyana, *quoted by Colebrooke*. Sáyana's remarks are alone sufficient to indicate the fusion of ideas as regards the Sun and Brahma.

worshipper utters the mystic words Bhuh, Bhuvar, and Swar, or Earth, Sky, and Heaven; which seem to comprise all the deities who dwell on Earth, Sky, and Heaven, under the three conceptions of Fire, Air, and the Sun. Finally, the Gáyatri is pronounced, which appears to be an expression of the Vedic idea of the supremacy of the Sun god, moulded by Brahmanical commentators into the monothetistic conception of the Supreme Soul as Brahma.[11]

The frequent repetition of this simple ritual is a point which is strongly insisted upon by Manu[12] By such frequent repetitions a large amount of religious merit was to be obtained by the twice-born; but should a twice-born man neglect to repeat the Gáyatri at sunrise and sunset, he was to be degraded to the condition of a Sudra. Two religious questions are involved in this law, which call for a few general remarks, namely: First, the religious value of a daily repetition of the same ritual in maintaining and confirming a belief in any particular creed. Secondly, the relative effect of punishment in the present life, and the threat of punishment hereafter, in the suppression of heresy.

On the first question it may be remarked that, notwithstanding all that has been urged against the vain repetition of formal words and prayers by the Hindus, a ritual which is bound up with the routine of daily life and duty can never fail to exercise a powerful influence upon the religious faith of the worshipper: Indeed, it may be asserted that so long as the repetition continues, so long the faith will remain present in the conscience; and that when the repetition is discontinued the faith itself begins to die away. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that whilst a ritual may be purely formal, it is not necessarily cold and lifeless. Day by day the utterances are the same, but if they are associated

[11] The following texts in Manu seem to indicate that this moulding of the Vedic worship into a Bráhmanical form was the work of Brahma himself: "Brahma, the Supreme Being, milked out from the three Vedas the three letters A, U, M, which form the monosyllable 'Aum'. He has milked out the three words—'Earth, Sky, and Heaven'. And he likewise milked out the three measures of that ineffable text entitled 'Gáyatri'. The triliteral syllable 'Aum', the three words 'Earth, Sky, and Heaven', and the three measures of the Gáyatri, must be considered as the mouth, or principal part of the Veda."—Manu, ii. 76, 77.

[12] Manu, ii. 84—87.

with the more impressive phases of human life, with times of danger and sorrow as well as with the day of prosperity and rejoicing, with the pains of sickness and the horrors of death, with the celebration of marriage rites and the birth of a first-born son, such a ritual will ever stir the heart with religious emotions.

The relative effect of punishment in the present life, and of the threat of punishment in the life hereafter, is a question of great importance in the history of religious development. But in India it assumes even larger proportions, because it must be considered in connection with the mighty engine of oppression which is involved in the institution of caste. Fear of punishment hereafter can obviously exercise but little effect upon a heretic, who disbelieves in the sinfulness of heresy, or in the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments. Hence religious lawgivers in general have enacted temporal punishments for those who refuse to observe the established rites and ordinances. But neither imprisonment, nor exile, nor dragooning, nor even the stake, will exercise such a powerful effect upon the imagination as a caste degradation, which is remorseless in its results, and which may be visited upon the children through countless generations. The terrible significance of every law of Manu upon this point may thus be generally apprehended; and especially the force of that injunction which ordains that he, who neglects to repeat the Gáyatri at sunrise and at sunset, will be precluded like a Sudra from any participation in the rites of the twice-born.[18]

The daily sacramental rites prescribed in the Brahmanical code are five in number, and are connected with the worship of five orders of beings, namely: 1st, The Rishis, or Vedic bards, who were propitiated by the daily study of the Veda. 2nd, The Pitris, or departed ancestors, who were propitiated by the daily offering of cakes and water, 3rd, The Devatas, or Vedic gods, who were propitiated by daily oblations of ghee. 4th, The Spirits or ghosts, who were propitiated by daily offerings of rice. 5th, The Guests, or mortal men, who were propitiated by the exercise of a suitable hospitality.

These simple rites may have originated in Vedic times, but they are placed by Manu upon a Bráhmanical basis of a somewhat anomalous character; namely, the dogma that they were

[18] Manu, ii. 103.

to be performed in expiation of the unconscious slaughter of small living creatures at five domestic slaughter-houses, namely, the kitchen hearth, the grindstone, the broom, the pestle and mortar, and the water-pot.[14] It will however be remarked that there seems no possible connection or association between the places in question and the beings propitiated; between such utensils as the grindstone and broom on the one hand and such deities as the Pitris and Devatas on the other.

The so-called sacramental rite of the Rishis consists in the daily reading of the Veda. The ceremonial to be observed and which is still observed in connection with this study, is well worthy of consideration, inasmuch as it exhibits the extraordinary efforts which were made by the Bráhmans to enforce a profound reverence for the sacred books, and to subject the mind of the student to an implicit and unquestioning faith in their divine inspiration. The Veda was never to be read by any one but a Bráhman. It was never to be read in the presence of a Sudra, or at any time when the attention was likely to be distracted from the sacred duty.[15] The preparations to be made by a Bráhman student, before reading the Veda in the presence of a priestly preceptor, were of a very solemn character. The student first purified himself with water, according to an elaborate ritual, which treated different parts of the hand as pure or impure. He next put on a clean cloth, in order that the reading might be

[14] Manu, iii. 68—81.

[15] Bráhman householder must never read the Veda without pronouncing well the accents and the letters; nor must he ever read it in the prsence of Sudras; and should he have begun to read it in the last watch of the night, he must not go to sleep again afterwards, even though fatigued. A reader of the Veda, and a teacher of it to his pupils, must always avoid the reading of it on the following times, namely, when dust is collected by the wind, when the rains are falling, when lightning flashes and thunder rolls, when a preternatural sound is heard from the sky, when there is an earthquake, when there is an eclipse of one of the heavenly bodies, when an offensive smell prevails, when a corpse is being carried past, when the sound of weeping is heard, or when a son is born to the Raja. Again, a Bráhman must not read the Veda whilst the perfumes of an entertainment remain upon him; nor whilst he is lolling on a couch; nor whilst his feet are raised on a bench; nor shortly after he has swallowed meat, or the food given at the birth or death of a relative; nor whilst he is seated on horseback, or on a tree, an elephant, a boat, an ass, a camel, or a carriage.—Manu, iv. 99 *et seq.*

conducted with decency as well as with purity. Next he consecrated his hands, as it were, by rubbing them with the stalks of the holy kusa grass. Then he composed all his members, and took his seat upon stalks of kusa grass having their points turned towards the east. Finally he joined his hands together in token of worshipping the Veda; and in this posture he awaited the command of his preceptor. When that command was given, the student was to clasp the feet of his preceptor in token of reverence, and then make the three suppressions of breath, and pronounce the sacred monosyllable AUM. It was only after these preliminaries that the student was allowed to commence the reading of the allotted portion. When the lesson was over, and the preceptor ordered him to take rest, the student again performed the ceremony of clasping the feet of his master, making three suppressions of his breath, and pronouncing the tri-literal syllable Aum. Instructions which are imparted in this solemn manner, and which are still followed, can scarcely fail to be received as the mysterious teachings of the Supreme Being; whilst not a doubt is felt as regards the interpretation of the Veda which is furnished by the preceptor. The Veda is the expression of deity; the interpretation is the expression of infallible tradition.

This teaching of the Veda, as already indicated, was exclusively confined to twice-born youths; and only to those twice-born youths who were considered worthy of receiving such instruction. These restrictions sufficiently manifest the care and jealousy with which the ancient scriptures were regarded, and the great stress which was laid upon the interpretation and right understanding of those scriptures. Such jealous care will always be exhibited in that stage of religious development in which a new belief and ritual, like Bráhmanism, has been superadded to an ancient faith and ceremonial, like that of the Rig-Veda. It is associated with a claim to an exclusive right of interpretation; a right which has been held by the Bráhmans since the first establishment of their ascendancy, with the persistent object of interpreting the Vedas by the light of Bráhmanical ideas. Such a right naturally ceases to exist when the scriptures are allowed to be indiscriminately read by the masses of the laity; and when an appeal can thus be made to the authority of those scriptures against the authority of traditional interpretation. But such an

exclusive right to read and interpret the ancient scripture is naturally retained and guarded with jealous care by every true Bráhman; inasmuch as it is absolutely essential for the promulgation of Bráhmanical dogmas, which are theoretically based upon the authority of the Vedas, but which yet find no expression in the earlier hymns and traditions.

The mode by which the Bráhmanizing process has been carried on has been illustrated in the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana. It should however be remarked that this process has not been the work of a single generation, or a single century. For many ages the Hindu mind appears to have been gradually abandoning the ideas and institutions of the Vedic period, and to have been gravitating nearer and nearer towards pure Bráhmanism. Thus many practices which were tolerated by Manu, have been discountenanced by later Pundits, under the plea that they belonged to the three early Yugas of the world, and are not permissible in the present age of Kali. By this arbitrary ruling many social and religious usages, which had been sanctioned by antiquity, and appear to have been practised by the ancient Kshatriyas, have been denounced as being contrary to the laws which prevail in the age of Kali. Among these may be mentioned the sacrifice of a bull, a horse, or a man; the appointment of a man to become the father of a son by the widow of a deceased brother or kinsman; the use of spirituous liquors; the slaughter of cattle at the entertainment of a guest; and the use of flesh meat at the celebrated feasts of the dead, which are still performed under the name of Sráddhas.

This right of interpretation is further illustrated by a curious dogma which is laid down in the code of Manu for the reconciliation of conflicting texts. "Whenever", says the code, "there are texts which appear to be inconsistent with each other, they are all to be accepted as law. Thus there are three different texts in the Veda; one ordering that sacrifice should be offered when the sun was rising; a second ordering that sacrifice should be offered after the sun had risen; and a third ordering that the sacrifice should be performed when neither sun nor stars can be seen. From these texts it may be inferred that sacrifice may be performed at any or at all those times."[16]

[16] Manu, ii. 15.

The sacramental rite of the Pitris consisted in the daily offering of food, such as boiled rice, fruits, roots, milk, and water to the Pitris, or ghosts of departed ancestors. This was known as a daily Sráddha. It appears to have been an old Vedic rite, as the Pitris are invoked on more than one occasion in the hymns of the Rig-Veda.[17] It seems to have been practised by the people in honour of their ancient forefathers, who, like the gods, were supposed to be gratified by the offering of food. It will be seen hereafter that a great monthly Sráddha was also ordained for the more immediate ancestors according to a more elaborate and significant ritual; whilst a special Sráddha was performed on the death of a kinsman, and even formed a part of the marriage ceremony.[18]

[17] "May the Pitris, who are easily to be praised, protect us." Rig-Veda, Mand. VII. Hymn 106, v. 12.

[18] Manu, iii. 82.—The Pitris are here included in the sacramental rite of the Spirits, although a separate rite was to be celebrated daily in honour of the latter. Manu also discusses elsewhere the question of who and what the Pitris were; but the texts appear to be purely mythical, and devoid of all historical significance. For the convenience of reference they are given below.

"The Pitris, or great progenitors, are free from wrath, intent on purity, ever exempt from sensual passions, endued with exalted qualities; they are primeval divinities, who have laid arms aside. Hear now completely, from whom they sprang; who they are; and by what ceremonies they are to be honoured. The sons of Marichi and of all the other Rishis, who were the offspring of Manu, son of Brahmá, are called the companies of Pitris, or forefathers. The Somasads, who sprung from Viráj, are declared to be the ancestors of the Sádhyas; and the Agnishwáttas, who are famed among created beings as the children of Marichi, to be the progenitors of the Devas. Of the Daityas, the Dánavas, the Yakshas, the Gandharvas, the Uragas or Serpents, the Rákshasas, the Garudas, and the Kinnaras, the ancestors are Barhishads descended from Atri. Of Bráhmans, those named Somapas; of Kshatriyas, the Havishbats; of Vaisyas, those called Ajyapas; of Sudras, the Sakálins. The Somapas descended from Me, Bhrigu; the Havishmats, from Angiras; the Ajyapas, from Pulastya; the Sukálins, from Vasishtha. Those who are, and those who are not, consumable by fire, called Agnidagdhas, and Anagnidagdhas, the Kavya, the Barhishads, the Agnishwáttas, and the Saumyas, let mankind consider as the chief progenitors of Bráhmans. Of those just enumerated, who are generally reported the principal tribes of Pitris, the sons and grandsons, indefinitely, are also in this world considered as great progenitors. From the Rishis come the Pitris, or patriarchs; from the Pitris, both Devas and Lánavas; from the Devas, this whole world of animals and vegetables in due order."—Manu, iii. 192—201.

The scacrametal rite of the gods, or Devatas, consisted in pouring oblations of ghee upon the domestic fire in honour of the Vedic deities in the following order :

1st, To Agni, god of fire. 2nd, To Soma, the moon-god. 3rd, To Agni and Soma both together. 4th, To Kuhu, goddess of the day, when the moon is in the first and second quarters. 5th, To Anumati, goddess of the day, when the moon is in the third and fourth quarters. 6th, Prajapati, or the lord of creatures. 7th, to Dyava and Prithivi, goddess of sky and earth. 8th. To the fire of the good sacrifice. 9th, To the gods of the four quarters; Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Soma.[19]

The foregoing deities are all ancient and obscure, and although worshipped as a matter of form, have apparently passed out of the Hindu sphere of religious thought. The last oblation, namely, that to the gods of the four quarters, sufficiently betrays the change in the religious belief. In times primeval the Vedic Aryans had worshipped Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Soma, as great and independent deities, invested with divine attributes. Indra was the god of the firmament, who smote the rain cloud and brought down the waters. Yama was the god of death, or rather the judge of the dead, whose existence betrays a vague belief in the future state of the soul after death which prevailed in Vedic times. Varuna was the deity of waters, but was sometimes addressed in the language of elevated devotion. Soma is more obscure, but is generally indentified with the moon. Manu however represents these deities as the four guardians of the four quarters of the earth; and appears to denude them of all the moral and religious significance with which the first three are certainly invested in the hymns of the Rig-Veda.

The sacramental rite of Spirits consisted in offerings to all living creatures, Spirits included ; and appears to have originated in that belief in ghosts, which belongs to an early stage in religious development. After the rice had been cooked, every twice-born householder was to offer it to all living things according to the following ritual : 1st, He was to throw boiled rice near his door, saying : "I salute you, O Maruts [i.e. the winds.]" 2nd, He was to throw boiled rice into water, saying : "I salute

[19] Manu, iii. 84—87.

you, O water gods. 3rd, He was to throw boiled rice on his pestle and mortar, saying : "I salute you, O gods of large trees."

After this he was to throw boiled rice near his pillow to Sri [Lakshmi], the goddess of abundance; at the foot of his bed to the propitious goddess Bhadra-Káli ; in the middle of his house to Brahmá and his household god; and up in the air to all the assembled gods; by day to the Spirits who walk in light, and by night to those who walk in darkness. He was then to throw his offering for all creatures in the building on his house top, or behind his back ; and what remained he was to give to the Pitris with his face turned towards the south.[20]

The foregoing ordinances contain some curious illustrations of that belief in ghosts and spirits which belongs more or less to every age of which any record has been preserved. A consideration of the phenomena of life entering the infant in the womb, and leaving the body in the event of sickness, violence, or old age; and a consideration of the same phenomena as regards the vegetable kingdom, seem to have led to the conception of a spiritual existence as something apart from material existence. Thus the spirit of a man was supposed to have departed when the body had expired, and the spirit of a tree was supposed to ebb away with a sigh when the tree itelf was cut down. This belief was not necessarily confined to beings endowed with animal or vegetable life, but was more or less extended to inanimate things. such as stones, houses, weapons, utensils, springs, groves, mountains, and rivers; and in some cases it was extended to more complex conceptions, such as the village, the city, or the caste. Out of this primitive faith sprang the belief in a separate and spiritual existence of a ghost after the death of the body, which subsequently became modified by the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul into other bodies after death, as well as by the theory of a future state of rewards and punishments.

The shape in which the conception of ghosts presented itself to the orthodox Hindus in the time of Manu, may be readily inferred from the ritual laid down in the code. It will be seen that the worshipper was directed in the first instance to throw boiled rice to the winds, or Maruts, to the water gods, and the gods of large trees. These deities are Vedic, and their worship is emi-

[20] Manu, ii . 88—91.

nently fetische. It will moreover be seen that the worship of Indra is ignored, excepting as one of the gods of the four quarters; whilst the worship of the Maruts, which in Vedic times was already opposed to that of Indra, finds prominent expression. Next follows the propitiation of the goddess Lakshmi, who is the wife of Vishnu; the goddess Bhadra-Kali, who is generally identified with Durgá, the wife of Siva; and the god Brahmá and other deities. Here it should be remarked that neither of the three deities specified,—Lakshmi, Káli, or Brahmá—appear to have been regarded as national Hindu deities until a comparatively late period in the history of India ; and there is scarcely any allusion made in the code to the important deities, Vishnu and Siva, who are popularly regarded as husbands of Lakshmi and Durgá. How far they may have been worshipped as local or family deities prior to this Brahmanic period is of course open to question. Indeed Brahma, as the god of the Bráhmans, may have been worshipped by the Bráhmans from a very early date; and Lakshmi, as the goddess af abundance, and Bhadra-Káli, as an old domestic deity, may have been propitiated for ages before they were converted into Brahmanical deities, and associated in the age of Brahmanical revival with the worship of Vishnu and Siva, and incorporated in the national system of mythology. But neither Lakshmi nor Bhadra-Káli appear as objects of worship in the hymns of the Rig-Veda,[21] whilst the references to Brahma are very obscure, and chiefly connected with an attempted identification of that deity with Indra or Agni.

There is one point in the foregoing ritual which betrays extraordinary acuteness on the part of the compilers of the code. Throughout the Institutes of Manu, the exaltation of the god Brahma above the gods of the Vedic Aryans is never neglected; and yet in the daily ritual the worship of the Devatas is enforced and the worship of Brahma resolves itself into the simple rite of throwing boiled rice into the middle of the house. From this circumstances it is easy to infer that the worship of Brahma was as unpopular amongst the masses in the age of Manu, as it is amongst the Hindus in the present day; and that the compilers

[21] The introduction of the worship of Káli in the daily ritual of the Bráhmans, is involved in some obscurity, which may be cleared up hereafter in treating of the worship of Siva, which involves some peculiar ideas connected with ghosts and corpses.

of the code accordingly accommodated the national ritual to the national taste, which still hankered after the worship of the gods of their Vedas, in preference to the new deity which had been introduced by the Bráhmans.

The propitiation of the gods of the air, and of the spirits that walk by day and of those that walk by night, is more immediately connected with a belief in ghosts, and a fear of them as destructive agencies. A conception of ghosts, and especially of the ghosts of enemies, naturally gives rise to a dread of mysterious evil and secret mischief; and this dread increases, and serves to confirm the original belief, whenever any accident or disease befalls the cattle, the harvest or the household. Thus the old idea of propitiation by means of food finds expression in the daily ritual; and boiled rice is distributed as food to ghosts in general, to the ghosts of enemies as well as to those of friends.

The sacramental rite of men is simply an ordinance imparting a religious meaning to the ordinary duties of hospitality, especially in the event of the guests being Bháhmans, and above all being learned Bráhmans. Indeed whilst the code duly enjoins hospitality to guests, it significantly declares that oblations which are presented to ignorant Bráhmans are mere ashes. On the other hand, when oblations are offiered in the fire of a sacerdotal mouth, which richly blazes with true knowledge and piety, they will release the giver from distress, and even from deadly sin.[22]

In reviewing the foregoing sacramental rites, it is curious to observe how closely they are mixed up amongst the Hindus with such ordinary actions of life as the daily meals. Amongst western communities the custom prevails of praying to the Supreme Being for a blessing upon food which is about to be eaten, and to return thanks after a meal for the food which has been provided. But acording to the Hindu idea, a portion of the food is absolutely desired by the deity or deities, as well as by anomalous beings who are supposed to exercise an influence over the well-being of man. Thus every householder was required, before partaking of food, to propitiate the Rishis, Pitris, Devatas, Spirits, and Guests with offerings of portions of the very provisions which had been prepared for himself and his family;

[22] Manu, iii. 94—118.

and it is emphatically declared that he who partakes of food which has been dressed for himself only, and which has not been previously presented to the beings in question, eats in reality nothing but sin.[23]

[23] Manu, iii. 118.

CHAPTER VIII

EIGHT FORMS OF MARRIAGE

THE laws and precepts which are to be found in the Brahmanical code respecting marriage, may be divided into two classes, namely: 1st,—Those which refer to eight traditional forms of marriage, some of which are approved whilst others are condemned. The traditions respecting these eight forms of marriage are of considerable historical importance, inasmuch as they apparently belong to different communities, or to different stages in the civilization of the people. 2nd,—Those which refer to married life generally, and which compare a multiplicity of details respecting the age at which a man ought to marry, the family from whom he ought to select a wife, the kind of damsel to be selected, the treatment of women, the laws respecting adultery and divorce, and a variety of minute directions for the guidance of husbands and wives.

The laws and precepts belonging to this second class will be dealt with hereafter, in connection with the social condition of the Hindus.[1] The present chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the eight forms of marriage described in Manu, with the view of eliciting such historical results as appear to underlie the several traditions.

Before however indicating these eight forms of marriage rites, it may be as well to consider the ideas of marriage which prevailed in the Vedic period. It has already been stated that events which lie half hidden in the undergrowth of later Epic legends seem to belong to the Vedic age, although the composition of the poems undoubtedly belongs to the Bráhmanic age. Accordingly it may now be advisable to ascertain what further evidence can be adduced in confirmation of this hypothesis,

[1] The laws respecting the age at which a man ought to marry, and the wife which should be selected, will be found in Chapter XI. on the four Orders, in connection with the life of a householder. The laws respecting the condition of Hindu women will be found in Chapter XII., which is especially devoted to that subject.

by camparing the marriage customs which appear in the Epic legends, with those which find expression in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. When this has been done it may be useful to bring the results to bear upon the eight forms of marriage rites which are described in the Institutes of Manu.

The marriage customs which are to be found in the Epics seem to refer to two different classes of the community, namely, a peaceful class and a warrior class. The marriages which prevailed amongst the peaceful class may perhaps be exemplified by the union between Yayáti and Devayáni, which appears to have involved the idea of one wife married to one man. The marriages of Bráhmans may belong to the same class; although it is impossible to say whether they referred to the Rishis of the Vedic age, or to the Bráhmans of the Bráhmanic age. The marriages of the warlike community, who may be identified with the Kshatriyas, were altogether of a different character, and involved the conceptions of polyandry and polygamy, the Swayamvara, and the rights subsequently known as Gandharva and Rákshasa.

The system of polyandry is exemplified in the Mahábhárata by the marriage of Draupadi with the five sons of Pándu; and in the Rámáyana by the charge brought against Ráma and Lakshmana by Virádha. A trace of the extraordinary custom of the attempt to Brahmonize the former tradition by representing it as a sacred and exceptional mystery, is also to be found in a hymn of the Rig-Veda which is addressed to the two Aswins: "Aswins, your admirable (horses) bore the car which you had harnessed, (first) to the goal, for the sake of honour; and the damsel who was the prize came through affection to you, and acknowledged your (husbandship), saying, 'You are (my) lords'."[2] Strangely enough this verse exhibits the custom of polyandry under similar circumstances to those under which it appears in the Swayamvara of Draupadi. According to the Epic legend, Draupadi was the prize of the archery match, and was won by Arjuna. In the Vedic hymn however the damsel was apparently the prize of a chariot race, and was won by the two Aswins. The Aryan origin of this custom is thus placed beyond a doubt. Had it not existed amongst the Vedic Aryans, it would have been as impossible for a Vedic bard to dwell upon

[2] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 119, v. 5.

the recognized marriage of one damsel to two living brothers, as for a European bard of our time to select such a topic as a subject for a modern poem.

The system of polygamy finds a much larger expression in the Epic legends, as might have been expected in an era of conquest. Thus Vichitra-virya and Pandu were each married to two wives; and Pándu is said to have obtained his second wife by purchase. Dasaratha again had three wives; and many other instances might be quoted from later traditions. Traces of polygamy are also to be found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. Raja Swanaya on the banks of the river Indus, gave his ten daughters in marriage to a young Rishi named Kakshivat; and in return was duly praised in a Vedic hymn composed by his enthusiastic son-in-law.[3] In another hymn there is an allusion to the husband of many maidens.[4] Indeed, whilst an exceptional system like that of polyandry could only have originated from strong necessity, that of polygamy belongs to an age of half-barbarous sensuality, when self-indulgence was considered as the highest good.

The institution known as the Swayamvara, or self-choice, was however without doubt the most popular of all the forms of marriage which prevailed amongst the Vedic Aryans. It belongs to an age of Hindu chivalry, when a high-spirited and gallant race might be supposed to yearn for the love of women, as a sentiment higher and nobler than that of mere desire. The legend of the marriage of the Aswins seems to associate the Swayamvara with polyandry; and later Puranic legends associate it with polygamy. It however finds a beautiful and attractive expression in that exquisite picture of a wife's devotion, which is presented in the story of Nala and Damayanti; and there it is found in connection with the true conception of marriage in the permanent union of one woman and one man. The Swayamvara emphatically belongs to the old Vedic period, for it is distinctly recognized in the hymns of the Rig-Veda; not only in the verse already quoted, which intimates that the Aswins won a bride at a chariot-race; but in another hymn, where there is an allusion to

[3] Wilson's Rig-Veda, vol. ii. p. 14 *et seq.*
[4] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 116, v. 10.

a bride who was won at a Swayamvara by the youthful Vimada.[5] It will however be seen hereafter that there is no allusion whatever to the institution in the code of Manu.

The Gandharva and Rákshasa nuptials belonged to the old lawless times, and were in reality no marriages at all. The Gandharva form was simply a union prompted by mutual desire, and consummated without any preliminary ceremonies; and in this manner Dushyanta met Sakuntalá in the jungle, where the amorous pair followed the old Idyllic fashion, which ultimately led to the birth of the famous hero Bhárata, the ancestor of the lunar race. The Rákshasa form on the other hand consisted in the seizure of a damsel by force, after the conquest of her kinsmen; and in this manner Bhishma carried off the three daughters of the Raja of Kási. According to the old Kshatriya law, a wife even was compelled to submit to the desires of the conqueror of her husband; but then conquest was a necessary preliminary, and it was considered contrary to all rule for a man surreptitiously to carry off the wife of another, without having first fought her husband. Thus it was that Dhaumya protested against the outrage committed upon Draupadi by Jayadratha; and that Sita in like manner protested against the cowardice of Rávana. These Gandharva and Rákshasa marriages originated in the Vedic period, and were contrary to Bráhmanical law. It will indeed be seen hereafter that such unions were tolerated in the code of Manu, but they were permitted to the Kshatriyas alone; but even this toleration to the Kshatriyas is accompanied by expressions which sufficiently indicate a grave disapproval.[6]

[5] Rig-Veda, Mand I. Hymn 116, v. 1. H. H. Wilson explains in a note upon the passage, that the story is told by the scholiast, that Vimada having won his bride at a Swayamvara, was stopped on his way home by his unsuccessful competitors, when the Aswins come to his succour, and placed the bride in their chariot, repulsed the assailants, and carried the damsel to the residence of the husband. Wilson's Rig-Veda, vol. ii. p 306.

From other allusions in the hymns it would appear that Vimada was a Rishi, and that the father of the bride was a Raja. This seems to confirm the theory already indicated, that many of the Rishis, if not all of them, were Kshatriyas. The idea of a Bráhman contending at a Swayamvara, was regarded by the old Kshatriyas as an arrogant proceeding. It is somewhat singular that these allusions to the Swayamvara and polyandry should be associated with the obscure worship of the Aswins.

[6] Manu, iii. 26.

The eight forms of marriage described by Manu may now be described in the following order.

1st, The Brahmá marriage, in which a father invited a man versed in the Vedas, and of a good character; and then gave him his daughter, after clothing both of them, and entertaining them, and honouring them with ornaments. This is the ceremony of the Bráhmans. 2nd, The Daiva marriage, in which a father decks his daughter with ornaments, and then gives her to the priest officiating at a properly conducted sacrifice. This is the ceremony of the Devatas. 3rd, The Arsha marriage, in which a father receives from a bridegroom one pair of kine (a bull and a cow), or two pairs, for religious purposes, and then gives away his daughter in due form. This is the ceremony of the Rishis. 4th, The Prajápatya marriage, in which a father gives away his daughter to the bridegroom with due honour, after distinctly uttering this injunction : "May both of you perform together your civil and religious duties." This is the ceremony of the Prajapatis. 5th, The Asura mode, in which the bridegroom gives as much wealth as he can afford to the damsel and her kinsmen, and then takes her according to his own pleasure. 6th, The Gandharva mode, in which a youth and damsel are led by mutual desire to form a connection. 7th, The Rákshasa mode, in which a warrior seizes a maiden by force, and carries her from her home, while she weeps and calls for assistance, and after slaying or wounding her kinsmen. 8th, The Paisácha mode, in which the lover secretly embraces a damsel while she sleeps, or is intoxicated, or disordered in her mind. This is the basest and most wicked of all.[7]

The foregoing description of the eight forms of marriage must be now subjected to a critical examination. In the first instance there are two points for consideration : 1st, The four marriages which are first on the list, and which are permissible to all the four castes. 2nd, The four marriages which are last upon the list, and of which the validity is more or less impugned.[8]

As regards the four valid marriages, it will be seen that they differ in name, whilst the language implies that they respectively belonged to four different communities ; and by comparing the

[7] Manu, iii. 20 *et seq.*

[8] Ib. iii. 39—42.

four names with the characteristics of each form, some valuable inferences may be drawn. The distinction between each of the four may be thus exhibited : 1st, Bráhmans :—the gift of a daughter to a man learned in the Veda. 2nd, Devatas or Vedic Aryans; —the gift of a daughter to a sacrificing priest. 3rd, Rishis or Vedic bards;—the gift of a daughter in return for a pair or two of kine. 4th, Prajápatis;—the gift of a daughter to a bridegroom in order that the pair might perform together their civil and religious duties.

Here the distinction which has already been drawn between the Rishis and the Bráhmans appears to be involved in some confusion by the introduction of Devatas and Prajápatis as separate classes. But this confusion can be to same extent cleared up. The Bráhman mode of giving a daughter to a student in the Veda, was no doubt the predominant idea of marriage in the Bráhmanic age which is depicted in the code. It moreover applied to all the twice-born castes, as all were to be instructed in the Veda. This conception of marriage may therefore be accepted as historical. The mode however which is said to have prevailed amongst the Devatas, of Vedic Aryans, of giving a daughter to the sacrificing priest, is apparently mythical. The age of sacrifice was passing awry. Flesh sacrifices are scarcely tolerated in the code, and were certainly opposed to Bráhmanism. Still the traditions that the Vedic Aryans offered such sacrifices were treasured up by the masses. Hence, if it was ruled that the form sanctioned by the Bráhmans was the gift of a daughter to a student in the Vedas, it was easy to arrive at the mythical idea that the form sanctioned amongst the Devatas was the gift of a daughter to a sacrificing priest. But whilst one idea is in accordance with human nature, the other is repugnant to it. To marry a daughter to a young Vedic scholar is natural and not unpleasing; but to marry a daughter to a man who has just been acting in the capacity of a butcher or a cook, even though it has been in the service of the gods, is opposed to instincts of human nature. Moreover the latter idea is opposed to the traditions of the Vedic Aryans, who regarded such hired priests as mere mercenaris unworthy of forming an alliance with the daughter of a Kshatriya, although in the old Vedic foretime a Raja might have given his daughter in marriage to a Vedic bard. In one direction however the apparently mythical idea of giving a daughter to a sacrificing

priest may have had a historical basis. In the old Vedic period the priest and the head of a household were identical. The idea therefore of giving a daughter in marriage to a priest, may have merely involved the idea of giving her in marriage to the head of a household.

The tradition as regards the third form of permissible nuptials, namely, that the mode amongst the Rishis was to give a daughter to a bridegroom in exchange for a pair or two of kine, is no doubt historical; and it probably prevailed more or less amongst all the Vedic Aryans, as it does even in the present day among many primitive tribes in India. It furnishes moreover a further proof of the distinction between the Rishis, or Vedic bards, and the Bráhmans as priests and worshippers of Brahma, which has been laid down in a previous chapter. It may be added in the present place, that the names of many celebrated Rishis are affixed to the Vedic hymns which they respectively composed;[9] and that

[9] Amongst the authors of the hymns of the Rig-Veda are to be found the time-honoured names of Kanwa, Parásara, Gotama, Kasyapa, Agastya, Viswámitra, Vámadeva, Atri, Bharadwaja, and Vasishtha. These Rishis have for ages been regarded as Bráhmans, and their exaltation would naturally tend to the glorification of the Bráhmans as a caste. Accordingly their names are to be frequently found in the Brahmanical versions of the Mahábhárata and Ramayana, but always under suspicious circumstances arising from being associated with supernatural details, or with palpable anachronisms. Kanwa was the putative father of Sakuntalá, the mother of Raja Bhárata, whose son Hastin founded the city of Hastinápur. Parásara was the holy sage who is said to have created a mist by the power of his religious austerities, in order that he might gratify his passion for a fish-girl, by whom he became the father of Vyása. Gotama was the sage whose connubial felicity was disturbed by Indra, and who subsequently pronounced a curse, by which his wife was turned to stone, and her seducer was covered with a thousand eyes. Kasyapa was the mythical progenitor of he Sun, and consequently the forefather of the Solar race at Ayodhyá. Agastya gave mythical weapons to the divine hero of the Rámáyana, drank up the sea with all its crocodiles, and big fishes, and prevented the Vindhya mountain from attaining a greater altitude. In the Mahábhárata Viswamitra is represented as the real father of Sakuntalá by a celestial nymph ; and he re-appears in the Rámáyana for the purpose of telling a number of absurd stories to Ráma, and bringing about the marriage of Ráma and Sitá. Vámadeva was the Minister of Dasaratha, but has very little to do in the action of the poem of the Rámáyana. Atri is the mythical progenitor of the Moon, and consequently the ancestor of the Lunar race of Bhárata ; but yet he lived to entertain Ráma and Sita at his hermitage in the neighbourhood of Chitra-kuta. Bharadwája was the mythical father

they could scarcely have been Bráhmans, because their hymns are in no way connected with the worship of the god Brahma. On the contrary, if any stress may be laid upon the general references in the Rig-Veda to the Rishis as a collective body, it would appear that the Rishis stand prominently forward as the worshippers of those Vedic deities who were the least in favour with the Bráhmans.[10]

Here it may be as well to take into further consideration the distinction which Manu draws between the marriage rite of the Rishis and that of the Bráhmans. The former appears to be the most ancient, as it certainly was the most primitive; and moreover was devoid of any religious meaning such as clearly appertains to the other three approved marriages. No religious qualification was required in the bridegroom, and the young man simply obtained a damsel by presenting her father with a pair or two of kine; a practice so foreign to the civilization which appears to have prevailed in the time of Manu, that the Hindu lawgiver is compelled to defend it by urging that such a gift of kine to the father of the bride was not a purchase.[11] The ceremony taught by the Bráhmans was altogether different. The bridegroom was assumed to be learned in the Veda. He was invited and hospitably entertained by the father of the damsel, and then married to the daugh-

of Drona, the preceptor of the Pándavas and Kauravas ; and the equally mythical entertainer of the army of Bhárata at Prayága, or Allahabad. Vasishtha again is said to have been the preceptor of Dasaratha, and takes a prominent part in the minor action of the Rámáyana. These details have been brought forward to prove that the association of the individuals in question with the main tradition in the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana is purely mythical.

[10] The Rishis are specially referred to as a collective body in the following hymns. "Friendly to man were those of the ancient Rishis whose praises thou (Indra) hast listened to." (Mand. VIII. Hymn 29, v. 4). "Aswins, hearing the many prayers of the Rishis." (Ib. Hymn 70, v. 5). "The bride of Surya (i.e. Ushas, the dawn) . . . hymned by the Rishis." (Ib. Hymn 75, v. 5). "Invigorated by the praise of a thousand Rishis, this Indra is vast as the ocean." (Mand. VIII. Hymn 3, v. 4). "Amid those who do not praise thee, Indra, amid the Rishis who do praise thee......may thou increase" (Ib. Hymn 6, v. 12). "Come, Aswins,...... when the Rishis formerly invoked you for protection ; so now, Aswins, come to my devout praises." (Ib. Hymn 8, v. 5). From the tenor of these mantras it would seem that the Rishis are regarded as even more ancient than the composition of many of the hymns.

[11] Manu, iii. 53

ter, after which the father of the bride presented the pair with clothes and ornaments.

Another and equally significant distinction seems to be drawn between the ceremony of the Bráhmans and that of the Prajápatis. In the former a father gives away his daughter in subordination to the bridegroom; a subordination which is perfectly in accordance with Brahmanical ideas, and which finds full expression in other parts of the code of Manu. In the ceremony of the Prajápatis, the father gives his daughter to the bridegroom, and enjoins them to "perform together their civil and religious duties." This latter expression seems to imply a higher social position on the part of the wife, and one which approaches to an equality with the husband; and this elevation of women in the social scale is in accordance with Kshatriya institutions, and certainly finds expression in the Rig-Veda.[12] It is however apparently connected with a religious system, as some stress is laid upon the religious duties of the married pair. Now the Prajápatis were undoubtedly a religious community; and the question which arises for consideration is whether any distinction can be laid down between the Prajápatis as worshippers of Prajápati, and the Bráhmans as worshippers of Brahma or Brahmá. Hitherto Prajápati has always been indetified with Brahmá, and the conception of each deity as the creator of the universe appears to be the same. But it by no means follows that the two conceptions did not originate from different sources and became subsequently blended together; and it is not impossible that the worship of Prajápati, as one God, is associated with Manu, who has been termed a Prajápati.[13] Again, the worship of the Pitris is associated with Prajápati; and the Pitris are said to reside in the heaven of Prajápati; and Manu lays down a distinction between the world of the Sun, as the heaven of the Prajápatis, and the world or heaven of Brahma.[14] The question however can scarcely be regarded as fairly solved; and it can only be conjectured that Prajápati, or ruler, may have been originally a Kshatriya conception of the One God; and that Brahma may in like manner have been the Brahmanical conception of the Supreme Being.

[12] See Rig-Veda, Mand I. Hymn 26, vol. iv. Wilson's note.

[13] See the Mantras already quoted in the Introduction to Vol. I. p 29 of the Original Edition.

[14] Manu, iv. 182.

It may now be as well to recapitulate the conclusions which seem to be established by the foregoing data. The most ancient form of marriage was apparently that of the Rishis, in which a bridegroom gave a pair or two of kine to the father of the bride, probably for the purpose of a marriage feast. A relic of this primitive custom is still to be traced in the modern rite, in which a cow is tied up, but let loose instead of being killed.The Daiva form is dubious. The Prajápatya form is apparently later in the order of time, being connected with a monotheistic religion which prevailed during a transition period between the worship of the Vedic deities and that of the god Brahma, and entailed civil and religious duties upon both men and women. The Brahma form is apparently the most modern of all.

Having thus brought under review the four forms of marriage which were permitted by the code, it becomes necessary to take into consideration the four remaining nuptials, three of which were famous in the national traditions, and may have been occasionally practised in the age of Manu, but all of which were more or less censured by the Hindu lawgiver. They also seem to some extent to appertain to different communities, or perhaps to different phases of civilization; but they are all widely separated from the four orthodox forms by one general characteristic, namely, the absence of all ceremony, religious or otherwise. The conditions of each may be thus exhibited : 1st, The Asura, in which the bridegroom purchased a damsel of her father. 2nd, The Gandharva, in which a union was prompted by mutual desire, and in which the rite was not necessarily binding for the future. 3rd, The Rákshasa, in which a damsel was captured by force of arms. 4th, The Paisácha, in which a damsel was surprised whilst asleep, or under the influence of strong liquor, or disordered in her intellect.

Of these four marrriage customs, the first and last, namely, the Asura and Paisácha, were altogether forbidden by Manu ; whilst the Gandharva and Rákshasa were only permitted to warriors, or men of the Kshatriya caste.

The Asura custom might be supposed by its name to refer to marriages amongst the Asuras or aborigines ; but in Manu's time, when the caste system had been fully established, the term Asura was probably employed only as one of approach. It is not difficult to understand that the primitive custom of a bride-

groom giving a pair of kine to the father of his bride, would degenerate in an age of comparative luxury into a mere matter of bargain and sale; in which family rank and personal attractions were duly considered and an equivalent demanded in money and jewels.[15] The Gandharva marriage on the other hand might be regarded as the expression of a woman's independence in the disposal of her affections; or, what has already been indicated, it might merely refer to the idyllic loves of pastoral times, when a swain met a damsel in the forest, and the unsophisticated pain simply obeyed the dictates of mutual desire without regard to law or ceremony. The Rákshasa marriage again refers to a custom which prevailed during the wars between the Aryan invaders and the aborigines, by which the daughters and even the wives of the conquered became the prize of the conquerors. The Paisácha however has not a semblance to either a form or a right. The damsel was neither purchased, nor seduced, nor carried away

[15] Marriage customs have already changed since the time of Manu. In Bengal the great difficulty is for the faher of daughters to procure husbands for them, and a system prevails not unlike the purchase of bridegrooms. At this present moment, if a father wishes to marry a daughter to a young Bengalee who has taken a degree at the Calcutta University, he must agree to spend a much larger sum of money upon the marriage entertainment, and upon the jewels and gifts, than would have been necessary had the bridegroom failed to pass the University examination. The vast expense attending the purchasing of a bridegroom of the Kulin caste is well known; and a curious illustration of the social ideas upon this matter may be obtained from a recent biography of a Bengalee millionnaire, named Ramdoolal Dey, who wished to marry his daughter to a young Kulin named Radhakissen. The bigraphy is written by an intelligent Bengalee gentleman, named Girish Chunder Ghose; and the following extract is given in the very words of the author: "Born of parents wretchedly poor, the soul of Radhakissen was as small as his circumstances were pitiful. He Koolinism was the only bait that had attracted Ramdoolal to the lad. The lad, though not ugly, was ungainly. His hair was red and his features were gross. He had not received even an ordinary education. Yet Ramdoolal was anxious to wed his eldest and most favourite daughter,—a daughter in whose name he had built a ship,—to the son of a Koolin. That daughter refused however to marry the bridegroom thus selected for her. She had seen the boy herself; she loathed him with the absurd hate of a child. On the night on which the marriage was consummated, the bride screamed, and the bride writhed on her seat whilst being conveyed to the alar. So violent indeed was her conduct, that Ramdoolal was compelled to sofen her, in order that the marriage rites might ge proceeded with, by pouring a handful of gold mohurs into her lap."

captive, but was simply taken at a disadvantage; an outrage which was far more likely to be committed amongst a peaceful community than amongst a race of chivalrous warriors like the Kshatriyas. The origin of the name Paisácha is somewhat curious. The Pisáchas were evil spirits, or ghosts, who were supposed to haunt the earth; but sometimes they were identified with the more terrible and uncivilized aborigines.[16] If therefore a damsel found herself likely to become a mother, without being able to furnish a satisfactory reason for her maternity, she would naturally plead that she had been victimized by a Pisácha; and probably from this circumstance the term came to be applied to all cases in which a damsel had been taken at a disadvatage by a mortal lover. In modern times however the belief is still very general throughout the rural districts of India, that wives as well as maidens may be occasionally victimized by such ghostly admirers.

The law permitting Gandharva and Rákshasa marriages to the Kshatriyas is not without historical significance. It seems to indicate that at the time the code of Manu was promulgated the Kshatriyas formed a powerful class of the community; and that the Bráhmans found necessary to temporize, in order to reconcile so arrogant and important a caste with Brahmanical law.[17]

The respective merits and demerits of the eight forms of marriage are thus indicated by Manu :

"The son of a wife by the Brahmá rite, if he performs virtuous acts, redeems from sin ten ancestors and ten descendants, and redeems likewise himself, making twenty-one persons in all. The son of a wife by the Daiva rite redeems seven ancestors and seven descendants. The son of a wife by the Arsha rite redeems three ancestors and three descendants. The son of a wife by the Prajápatya rite redeems six ancestors and six descendants. By these four marriages are born sons illumined by the

[16] "Destroy, Indra, the tawny-coloured, fearfully-roaring Pisáchi ; annihilate the Rákshasas." Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 133, v. 5.

[17] The custom of treating female captives as prize is as old as the hills. In this fashion Chryseis and Briseis were allotted to Agamemnon and Achilles ; and the mother of Sisera is represented in the song of Deborah and Barak as expecting the return of the victorious army of her son with a damsel or two to every man. The brute violence of the custom was greatly mitigated in the Mosaic law, which ordered that a beautiful captive should shave her head and be permitted to lament her parents for a whole month, before a warrior could make her his wife.

Veda, beloved by the learned, adorned with beauty, endowed with goodness, wealthy, renowned, blessed with all lawful enjoyments, performing every duty, and living a hundred years. But in the four other marriages, which are base marriages, are born sons, who act cruelly, speak falsely, abhor the Veda, and the duties prescribed therein."[18]

The foregoing observations of the Hindu lawgiver on each of the eight forms of marriage furnish a curious illustration of the system of merits and demerits, which has already been explained as forming the ground-work of Brahmanism. The ingenuity of the authors of the code in dealing with this subject is well worthy of notice. According to the dogma inculcated, the merits of an individual acquired by an orthodox marriage will not only tend to his own deliverance from the punishment awarded to demerits, but in some cases will deliver his ancestors or his descendants from such evil consequences. Now, amongst the Hindus the marriage of a son is brought about by the parents; and although there is reason to belive that this custom was not in force in very ancient times, yet the obligation of a father as regards the marriage of his sons and daughters seems to have been generally acknowledged by Manu. The Hindu lawgiver accordingly enlists the self-interest of parents, by declaring that the merits of those who contract the better forms of marriage will be felt through a certain number of degrees in the ascending line; and in like manner he enlists the self-interest of the pair about to be married, by declaring that such merits will be also felt by the children through a corresponding number of generations in the descending line. In the same spirit it is asserted that the sons who are born from any of the prohibited marriages will turn out the vilest of characters.

[18] Manu, iii. 36—41.

CHAPTER IX

THE SRADDHA, OR FEAST OF THE DEAD

THE Sráddha, or feast of the dead, is perhaps one of the most primitive, as it certainly is one of the most simple, of all the Vedic rites that have been handed down from a period of remote antiquity to the present day. It originated in the crude idea already indicated, that the spirit or ghost had a separate existence after death, and that it might be gratified or propitiated with offerings of food. This idea certainly involved a belief in the prolonged existence of the spirit in a future state of being; but in its origin it had no connection with the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. It is rather to be traced to the old world belief, which has existed in all ages, and which still lingers in the imagination of even a philosophic and material generation, that the spirits of the departed hover at times near those persons and places which were associated with their earthly careers, and are gratified by any tribute of respect which may be paid to their memory.[1]

The Sraddha, or feast of the dead, was thus in its earliest form a pleasing expression of natural religion, which long preceded the advent of a priestly caste, or the introduction of a systematic ritual. But like every other popular ceremonial which has been handed down amongst the Hindus from the Vedic period, it has been recast in a Brahmanical mould; and it is in this latter form that the institution appears in the Epics as well as in the laws of Manu. It consists of three distinct rites : 1st, The Daily Sraddha, to be performed in propitiation of the Pitris, or ghosts of remote ancestors. 2nd, The Monthly Sráddha, to be performed in propitiation of the more immediate paternal ancestors. 3rd, The Funeral Sraddha, to be performed within a certain period after death, or the hearing of the death, of a near kinsman.

[1] This idea finds exquisite expression in Collin's poem on the death of Thomson :

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is dress'd ;
And oft shall stay the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest."

It should also be remarked that Sraddhas are likewise performed on other occasions, and notably at the celebration of any marriage ceremony.[2]

The daily Sráddha was an offering either of boiled rice, or of milk, roots, and fruit, or of water only, to the Pitris, or remote ancestors. In modern practice it is considered sufficient to pour water out of a particular vessel every day as a drink-offering to the Pitris.

The monthly Sraddha may be considered under four separate heads : 1st, Ceremonies to be performed at a monthly Sraddha. 2nd, Persons to be entertained at the monthly Sraddha. 3rd, Persons to be excluded from the monthly Sraddha. 4th, Relative merits of the different kinds of victuals which may be offered at a monthly Sraddha.

The ceremonies at the monthly Sraddha, as described in the Institutes of Manu, are of a very intelligible character; and seem to have been laid down for the purpose of converting the old Vedic offering of food and water into a great feast to the Bráhmans. The monthly Sráddha was performed on the dark day af the moon, that is, when the sun and moon are in conjunction. A sequestered spot was selected, such as was supposed to be pleasing to the ghosts; and then the invited Bráhmans were conducted to their allotted seats, which had been purified with kusa grass, and were

[2] In a work entitled *Nirnaya-Sindhu*, Colebrooke found authority for classifying obsequies under twelve heads. (1) Daily obsequies, either food or water only, in honour of ancestors in general, but excluding the Viswadevas. (2) Obsequies for a special cause, that is, in honour of a kinsman recently defunct. (3) Voluntary obsequies, performed by way of supererogation, for the greater benefit of the deceased. (4) Obsequies for increase of prosperity, performed upon any accession of wealth, and upon other joyful occasions. (5) A Sráddha intended to introduce the ghost of a deceased kinsman to the rest of the ghosts. (6) Obsequies performed on appointed days, such as that of new moon, full moon, sun's passage into a new sign, etc. (7) A Sráddha to sanctify the food at an entertainment given to a company of Bráhmans. (8) One performed when stated numbers of Bráhmans are fed at the cost of a person who needs purification from some defilement. (9) A Sráddha preparatory to the celebration of any solemn rite, and considered as a part of such rite. (10) A Sráddha in honour of deities. (11) Oblations of clarified butter, previous to the undertaking of a distant journey. (12) A Sráddha to sanctify a meal of flesh-meat prepared simply for the sake of nourishment. See Colebrooke's *Essays on the Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus.*

presented with garlands of flowers and sweet perfumes. The officiating Bráhman then satisfied the three Vedic deities,—Agni, Soma, and Yama,—by pouring an oblation of ghee upon the sacred fire. He then proceeded to satisfy the ancestors of the giver of the Sráddha. He first sprinkled water on the ground with his right hand, and then formed three balls or cakes of boiled rice, which are called pindas. One of these cakes is presented to each of the three immediate paternal ancestors, namely, the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather. The offering of pindas, however, is said to be extended to the fourth, fifth, and sixth degrees of paternal ancestors in the ascending line, by the simple process of wiping the hand with kusa grass after offering the pindas to the ancestors of the first, second, and third degree. This ceremony was followed by a great feast to the Bráhmans consisting of vessels filled with rice, together with broths, potherbs, milk and curds, ghee, spiced puddings, milky messes of various sorts, roots of herbs, ripe fruits, and savoury meats; and during the feast passages were read from the Sástras. The remains of the cakes were to be eaten by a cow, a Bráhman, or a kid; or to be cast into water or fire;[3] but the wife of the householder was to eat the middle of the three cakes, in order that she might become the mother of a son, who should be long-lived, famous, strong-minded, wealthy, and the father of many sons. When the Bráhmans had duly feasted, the householder gave a feast to the kinsmen of his father, and afterwards to the kinsmen of his mother.[4] In cases of poverty, however, the offering of water seems to be considered a sufficient satisfaction of the spirits of the six paternal ancestors.[5]

As regards the persons to be invited to the monthly Sráddha, great stress is laid by the code upon the entertainment of learned Bráhmans, and the exclusion of ignorant ones from the Sráddha; but it is added that if such learned Bráhmans cannot be found, certain relatives may be entertained. This last expression is somewhat obscure, and may possibly imply that the Sráddha was originally eaten by the kinsmen, and that the introduction of learned Bráhmans was a later idea.[6]

[3] A curious illustration of the popular belief as regards the mode by which the food was supposed to reach the ghosts, is to be found in the discussion between Ráma and Jávali.

[4] Manu, iii. 206—265. [5] Ib. iii. 283.

[6] Manu, iii. 148.

Manu's catalogue of the persons who were to be excluded from a monthly Sráddha is of a very miscellaneous character; and is chiefly valuable from the illustrations which it furnishes of the Brahmanical notion of impure or immoral characters. The catalogue may be re-distributed under four general heads, according to the four different grounds upon which the individuals specified have been respectively excluded, namely, moral, religious, physical, and professional.

The persons to be excluded from a Sráddha on moral grounds, are :

"A Brahmachári who has not read the Veda ; a Bráhman who has committed theft ; one who opposes his preceptor ; a younger brother married before the elder ; an elder brother not married before the younger ; one who subsists by the wealth of many relatives ; the husband of a Sudra ; the son of a twice-married woman ; a husband in whose house an adulterer dwells ; one who teaches the Veda for wages ; one who gives wages to such a teacher ; the pupil of a Sudra ; the Sudra preceptor ; a rude speaker ; the son of an adulteress born either before or after the death of her husband ; a forsaker of his mother, father, or preceptor without just cause ; a man who forms a connection with great sinners ; a house-burner ; a giver of poison ; an eater of food offered by the son of an adulterer ; a suborner of perjury ; a wrangler with his father ; a drinker of intoxicating spirits ; one of evil repute ; a cheat ; the husband of a younger sister married before the elder ; an injurer of his friend ; a father instructed in the Veda by his own son ; one who diverts water-courses ; a seducer of damsels ; a man who delights in mischief ; a Bráhman living as a Sudra ; one who observes neither approved customs nor prescribed duties ; a constant and importunate asker of favours ; one who is despised by the virtuous ; the husband of a twice-married woman ; a Bráhman of bad manners ; and an ignorant Bráhman."

The persons to be excluded from a Sráddha on religious grounds, are :

"Those who profess to disbelieve in a future state ; a Bráhman who has performed many sacrifices for other men ; those who worship images for gain ; one who deserts the sacred fire ; one who omits the five great sacraments ; a contemner of

Bráhmans; a despiser of scripture; and one who sacrifices only to the inferior gods."

The persons to be excluded from a Sráddha on physical grounds, are:

"Those with whitlows on their nails; those with black-yellow teeth; a consumptive man; a man who has lost an eye; a man with elephantiasis; an impotent man; an epileptic man; one with erysipelas; a leper; a lunatic; a blind man; a club-footed man."

The persons to be excluded from a Sráddha because of their trade or profession, are:

"Physicians; gamesters; usurers; dancers; sellers of meat; those who live by low traffic; a public servant of the whole town; a public servant of the Raja; a feeder of cattle; a seller of the moon-plant; a navigator of the ocean; a poetical encomiast; an oil man; one who employs gamesters for his own benefit; a seller of liquors; a maker of bows and arrows; the keeper of a gambling-house; a common informer; a tamer of elephants, bulls, horses, or camels; one who subsists by astrology; a keeper of birds; one who teaches the use of arms; one who builds houses for gain; a messenger; a planter of trees for pay; a breeder of sporting dogs; a falconer; one who supports himself by tillage; a shepherd; a keeper of buffaloes; and one who removes dead bodies for pay."

The food that is given to such men at a Sráddha becomes base and impure; and the giver of the Sráddha will be punished in the next life.[7]

The foregoing catalogues of persons who are to be excluded from a Sráddha are very suggestive. In the first place it will be noticed that Manu classifies immorality, heresy, and deviation from caste rule, with physical evils, such as leprosy, blindness, and elephantiasis; and this intermingling is more perceptible in the original text, where no attempt has been made to separate the precepts under different heads. This strange confusion of sin and disease appears to have originated in the old idea, connected

[7] Manu, iii. 150 *et seq.* The punishments dogmatically awarded by Manu to sinners in the next life are without significance, excepting so far as they illustrate the doctrine of merits and demerits already explained. Accordingly they are only given in the above text in a general and abstract form.

with the dogma of the transmigration of the soul, that disease was the punishment of sins committed either in this life or in a previous state of existence.

The peculiar usages which seem to have originated some of the precepts are also well worthy of notice. Thus it has been seen that it was considered wrong for a younger brother or a younger sister to be married before an elder brother or an elder sister; a notion which could only find a place amongst a people who believed that the marriage of a daughter was a duty which every parent was bound to fulfil.[8] It has also been seen that a woman who married a second husband was held in great abhorrence; and to the present day the marriage of a Hindu widow, even when her first husband has died before the marriage has been consummated, is regarded with a national antipathy which education and legislation have done but little to remove. It is also somewhat curious that Manu should exclude a constant and importunate asker of favours from a Sráddha; from which it would appear that askers of favours were as constant and importunate in the age of Manu as they are in our own time.

Amongst the persons whom Manu directed should be excluded on religious grounds are to be found those who sacrifice only to the "inferior gods". This expression of "inferior gods" seems to suggest a religious opposition. Indeed it is not impossible that Manu is alluding to the old Vedic deities, who were treated by the Bráhmans as subordinate to their god Brahma. The injunction against the Bráhmans who performed many sacrifices for other men, may have been aimed at the mercenary priests who sacrificed for hire. The injunction against those who worshipped images for the sake of gain is involved in more obscurity, inasmuch as there does not appear to be any satisfactory reference to images in the hymns of the Rig-Veda; although it is easy to conceive that such a form of worship must sooner or later find expression.

The exclusion of men who followed certain trades or professions from the entertainment given at a Sráddha, furnishes in like manner some striking illustrations of the old opposition between

[8] The same idea finds expression in the marriage of Jacob to Leah, when Jacob was really in love with the younger sister Rachel, and under the idea that Rachel was to be his bride.

the priest and the soldier, the Bráhman and the Kshatriya, which seems to be more or less identical with the opposition between the Bráhmans and the Vedic Aryans. Thus amongst the ancient Kshatriyas gambling was a favourite pastime, and certainly was not regarded as a vice, excepting when carried to a vicious excess and terminating in the ruin of a family. Even Yudhisthira, who is represented in the Mahábharata as an incarnation of Dharma, or goodness, and who was apparently regarded as a model Raja, is actually said to have disguised himself as a Bráhman, and in that guise to have taught the art of dice to the Raja of Viráta. But Manu excludes from the Sráddha every gambler, and every man who keeps a gambling-house or employs gamblers. Then again the Kshatriyas revelled in wine and flesh-meat; but Manu excludes the sellers of wine and meat from the Sráddha. The most significant precepts however are those which exclude the makers of bows and arrows, the tamers of horses, and those who taught the use of arms; for the bow was the favourite weapon of the Kshatriyas, and the taming of horses was regarded as a royal accomplishment; whilst two of the most patriarchal characters in the Mahábhárata, Bhishma and Drona, are said to have trained Pándu and Dhritarashtra, and their sons, the Pándavas and Kauravas, in the use of different kinds of weapons. The exclusion of navigators is equally curious. Navigation was certainly known to the Vedic Aryans, and is even recognized by Manu;[9] but it has always been regarded with peculiar horror by the Bráhmans; and consequently it is referred to the three first Yugas or ages, but discountenanced in the age of Kali. The exclusion of physicians seems to have originated in the idea that they must be impure from having to deal with impure things.

As regards the food to be offered to the ghosts at the monthly Sráddha, the precepts in Manu are also significant. The old primitive custom of offering fish and flesh is sufficiently recognized, but at the same time it is urged that the ghosts prefer a more simple and Brahmanical diet, such as milk and honey.[10] At

[9] Manu, viii. 156, 157.

[10] "Offerings of the following victuals are said to be capable of satisfying the ancestors of men for different periods. Tila [i.e. sesamum seeds], rice, barley, black lentils or vetches, water, roots, and fruit, given with the prescribed ceremonies, will satisfy the ancestors of men for an entire month. Fish will satisfy them for two months; venison for three months;

a later period it was declared that the feasting on flesh-meat at a Sráddha was forbidden in the Kali age.[11]

The funeral Sráddha, which is performed after the death of a kinsman, is in every respect similar to the monthly Sráddha, and consequently calls for no detailed description. The code lays down certain laws as regards the purification of the survivors, but they are devoid of historical significance. The ceremonies which accompanied and followed the death of Maháraja Dasaratha sufficiently illustrate the popular ideas and customs which still prevail.[12]

It will be seen from the foregoing data that the old Vedic belief in the worship of ancestors has been strangely Brahmanized by the compilers of the code. The monthy Sráddha, whilst ostensibly celebrated in honour of deceased ancestors, is in reality nothing more than an entertainment given to the Bráhmans. Again, the original idea appears to have originated in a childlike belief that the food and water sustain and refresh the spirit of the departed; whilst, according to the more modern Brahmanical doctrine, the performance of a Sráddha delivers the soul of the

mutton for four months ; birds, such as the twice-born may eat, for five months ; kid's flesh for six months ; spotted deer for seven months ; the antelope for eight months ; the ram for nine months ; the flesh of wild boars and wild buffaloes for ten months ; horses and tortoises for eleven months. But the milk of cows, and food made of that milk, will satisfy the ancestors for a whole year. ......The Pitris say : 'Oh ! may that man be born in our line who will give us honey and pure butter, both on the thirteenth day of the moon, and when the shadow of an elephant falls to the east'." Manu, iii. 266—274.

[11] See appendix to Manu, Haughton's translation.

[12] The celebration of these Sráddhas is frequently attended by a vast expenditure. The Bráhmans are feasted in great numbers, whilst money and food are lavishly distributed amongst the guests, and also amongst the lower classes of the community. At the Sráddha of Ramdoolal Dey, five lakhs of rupees, or £50,000 were expended. His biographer, Baboo Grish Chunder Ghosh, thus describes the proceedings on that occasion : "The Bráhman and the begger overflowed in Calcutta at this solemn ceremony. To the former gold and silver, and elephant and horses, and budgerows and boats, and carriages and palanquins, were given away with princely munificence ; to the latter upwards of three lakhs of rupees were distributed. On no one was less than a rupee bestowed, and if a begger woman was found to be with child, a second rupee was given to her. Did a begger bring a bird in his hand, the bird obtained its alms equally with its master."

dead person from the custody of Yama, the judge of the dead, and translates it to the heaven of the Pitris, or ancestors; there to remain until the merits of its previous life on earth are all exhausted, and then to return again to earth and re-animate another body. Thus it is the current belief that without the Sráddha the soul of the deceased cannot ascend to the heaven of the Pitris and take up its abode there.

CHAPTER X

THE FOUR CASTES

THE social fabric of the Hindus rests upon the caste system, namely, the division of the community, without regard to wealth or ability, into the four great classes of priest, soldier, merchant, and cultivator, or Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra. But besides this distinction of caste which dismembers society, there is a division of epochs or stages in the existence of the individual, which maps out the life of every twice-born man into four periods, namely, that of student, householder, hermit, and devotee. Accordingly the present chapter will be devoted to the consideration of the caste system and caste laws, which regulate more or less the social life of the Hindus; whilst the subsequent chapter will be devoted to the consideration of the four successive stages in the life of the individual man.

The probable origin of the four castes of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras has already been briefly indicated. A broad line of demarcation, which finds expression in the investiture of the thread, separates the three twice-born castes, who were apparently Aryan conquerors, from the Sudras, who were apparently a conquered race. The inference has accordingly been drawn that the Sudras were the original inhabitants of the land, who had been reduced to a servile condition by their Aryan conquerors. Traces of this distinction are to be found in the Vedic hymns; and indeed Manu himself refers the origin of caste to the Aryan settlement on the Saraswati. But in the Brahmanic age, which is the special subject of the code of Manu, the caste system was firmly rooted in the minds of the people as an article of religious belief; and it was associated with every religious act and duty, whilst enforced by public law as well as by moral and social rule. This distinction may be thus indicated :

Bráhmans, or priests, Kshatriyas, or soldiers and Rajas, Vaisyas, or merchants and farmers are termed the "twice-born" from wearing the sacred thread.

Sudras, or the servile class who tilled the soil are never invested with the thread.

The earliest account of the fourfold origin of caste appears in one of the later hymns of the Rig-Veda, known as the Purusha hymn, because it refers to Purusha, or the Supreme Spirit, who may be identified with Brahma. In this hymn the gods and Rishis are supposed to offer up Purusha as a sacrifice, and to dismember him for the purpose of creating the world out of his limbs. This is an ancient conception, and finds expression in the Scandinavian mythology. But Purusha was a spirit, and accordingly some difficulty appears to have been felt in assigning bodily members to a spiritual being. Indeed the Sanskrit commentator upon the passage explains that the gods did not actually offer sacrifice and bind Purusha as a victim; but that they offered mental sacrifice and contemplated Purusha as a victim.[1] The entire hymn has been translated by Muir, but the following extract contains all that refers to the four castes :[2]

"When they formed [or offered up] Purusha, into how many parts did they divide him ? What was his mouth ? What were his arms ? What were called his thighs and feet ?

"The Bráhman was his mouth ; the Rajamaya [i.e. Kshatriya] was made his arms ; that which was the Vaisya was his thighs ; the Sudra sprang from his feet."

Now whilst this hymn may possibly indicate the inferiority of the Sudra to the three twice-born castes, it can scarcely be said to establish the supremacy of the Bráhman over the Kshatriya. On the contrary, the myth only explains the mutual relation of the castes towards each other, and that too in figurative language which could scarcely offend the pride of the haughtiest Kshatriya; for the latter would readily admit that the Bráhmans were the mouth that promulgated Brahmanism, whilst they themselves were regarded as the arm that protected the common-weal.

In the code of Manu however, which is the full expression of Brahmanical assumption, the significance of the Vedic myth is altogether distorted for the purpose of setting the Bráhman above the Kshatriya. Instead of the twice-born castes forming the mouth, arms, and thighs of the Purusha, they are said to have sprung from those members ; and the new idea is introduced that the mouth is better than the arm. Manu says :

[1] Mahidhara, quoted by Muir.
[2] Muir's Sanscrit Texts, vol. i. chap. i. sect. 2.

"In order to preserve the universe, Brahmá caused the Bráhman to proceed from his mouth; the Kshatriya to proceed from his arm; the Vaisya to proceed from his thigh; and the Sudra to proceed from his foot. And Brahmá directed that the duties of the Bráhmans should be reading and teaching the Veda; sacrificing and assisting others to sacrifice; giving alms if they be rich, and receiving alms if they be poor. And Brahmá directed that the duties of the Kshatriyas should be to defend the people; to give alms; to sacrifice; to read the Veda; and to keep their passions under control. And he directed that the duties of the Vaisyas should be to keep herds of cattle; to give alms; to read the Sástras; to carry on trade; to lend money at interest; and to cultivate land. And he directed that the Sudra should serve all the three mentioned castes, namely, the Bráhmans, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaisyas; and that he should not depreciate them or make light of them. Since the Bráhman sprang from the mouth, which is the most excellent part of Brahmá, and since he is the first-born and possesses the Veda, he is by right the chief of the whole creation. Him Brahmá produced from his own mouth that he might perform holy rites; that he might present ghee to the gods, and cakes of rice to the Pitris or progenitors of mankind."[3]

The foregoing account calls for no further comment. The statement that the Bráhmans are the chief of the creation is simply an assumption, which the Hindu lawgiver continues to teach and enforce throughout the entire code.

The system of caste finds expression in every act of Hindu life, and like the doctrine of merits and demerits, imparts a religious significance to every ordinary proceeding. In its more general form it simply indicates the different professions of priest, soldier, merchant, and cultivator. Thus in ordinary salutations, or polite inquiries, a Bráhman was to be asked whether his devotion had prospered; a Kshatriya whether he suffered from his wounds; a Vaisya whether his wealth was secure; and a Sudra whether he was in good health.[4] In administering oaths to witnesses, however, a far wider distinction is laid down between members of either of the three twice-born castes and a Sudra.

[3] Manu, i. 88—94.
[4] Ib. ii. 127.

Thus a Bráhman was to swear by his veracity; a Kshatriya by his weapons, horse, or elephant; and a Vaisya by his kine, grain, or gold; but a Sudra was to imprecate upon his own head the guilt of every possible crime if he did not speak the truth.[5] The law as regards caste marriages betrays a conflict of usages, inasmuch as it recognizes polygamy, and seems to indicate that the Kshatriyas occasionally insisted upon taking the fair daughters of inferior castes to be their wives. It was enacted that a Bráhman, a Kshatriya, or a Vaisya should in the first instance marry a damsel of his own caste; and if, after fulfilling that duty, one or the other should be driven by inclination to marry a damsel of an inferior caste, he might do so in the direct order of the castes beneath him. This law is curiously artificial,

[5] Manu, viii. 113—The following texts respecting perjury, and the examination of witnesses, are very significant : "When the witnesses are all assembled in the middle of the court-room in the presence of the plaintiff and defendant, the judge, before examining them, should address them as follows : 'What you know to have been transacted in the matter before us between the two parties, declare at large and with truth, for year evidence in this cause is required'. The witness who is truthful will attain the highest fame here below, and the most exalted seats of happiness hereafter; such testimony is revered by Brahma. But the witness who speaks falsely will be fast bound under water in the cords of Varuna, and be wholly deprived of power during a hundred transmigrations. The soul itself is its own witness ; the soul itself is its own refuge ; let no one then offend his conscious soul, for it is the supreme internal witness of men ! The sinful have said in their hearts : 'None sees us !' But the gods distinctly see them, and so does the spirit within their breasts. The twice-born witnesses should be called upon by the judge to declare the truth in the presence of the divinity with their faces turned either to north or to the east. To a Bráhman the judge should say : 'Declare !' To a Kshatriya he should say : 'Declare the truth !' To the Vaisya he should compare perjury to the crime of stealing kine, grain, or gold. To the Sudra he should compare perjury to every crime, in the following language : 'Whatever places of torture have been prepared for the murderer of a Bráhman, for the murderer of a woman or child, for the injurer of a friend, or for an ungrateful man, have also been ordained for that witness who gives false evidence. If you deviate from the truth, the fruit of every virtuous act which you have committed since your birth will depart from you to the dogs. The man who gives false evidence shall go naked, shorn, and blind, and be tormented with hunger and thirst, and beg food with a potsherd at the door of the enemy. If he answer one question falsely he shall tumble headlong into hell in utter darkness. Even if he gives imperfect testimony, and asserts a fact which he has not seen, he will suffer pain like a man who eats fish and swallows the sharp bones'." Manu, viii. 79—95.

and is evidently aimed against all marriages between castes. Men of the twice-born castes were assured that if through weakness of intellect they irregularly married women of the Sudra caste, they would very soon degrade their families to the condition of Sudras. "If a Bráhman married a daughter of a Sudra as his first wife, that wife would have to prepare the sacrifices to the gods and the oblations to the Pitris, and neither the gods nor the Pitris would eat such offerings. For the crime of that Bráhman there was no expiation."[6] It was, however, ordered that in all marriage rites between different castes the bride was to take in her hand an emblem of the caste to which she belonged. Thus a bride of the warrior caste was to hold an arrow; a bride of the merchant caste was to hold a whip; whilst a bride of the lowest caste of all was to hold the skirt of a mantle.[7] Such arbitrary laws naturally tended to throw discredit upon all marriages between castes; and in the present day all such marriages have fallen into disuse and are strictly prohibited.

The more important illustrations of the caste system, which are to be found in Manu, may be grouped under five different heads, viz. : 1st, The veneration in which Bráhmans are to be held. 2nd, The privileges which are to be enjoyed by Bráhmans. 3rd, The occupations or mode of life to be followed by Bráhmans. 4th, The restrictions as regards diet which are to be observed by all men of the twice-born castes. 5th, The scale of punishment for cases of slander between men of dfferent castes.

The degree of veneration in which the Bráhman was to be held by all other men is explicitly laid down in the code of Manu. The Bráhman, it is said, sprang from the mouth of Brahmá. He was entitled to the whole of the universe by the right of primogeniture. He possessed the Veda, and was alone permitted to teach the laws of Manu[8] By his sacrifices and imprecations he could destroy a Raja in a moment, together with all his troops, elephants, horses, and chariots.[9] In his wrath he could frame new worlds, with new gods and new mortals.[10] Although convicted of every possible crime, he was never to be put to death by a Raja; he might be banished from the realm, but no injury was to be inflicted on himself or his property.[11]

[6] Manu, iii. 12—19.
[7] Ib. iii. 44.
[8] Ib. i. 94—101.
[9] Ib. ix. 313.
[10] Ib. ix. 315.
[11] Ib. viii. 380.

A twice-born man, who barely assaulted a Bráhman with the intention of hurting him, would be whirled about for a century in the hell termed Tamasa. He who smote a Bráhman with only a blade of grass would be born an inferior quadruped during twenty-one transmigrations. But he who shed the blood of a Bráhman, saving in battle, would be mangled by animals in his next birth for as many years as there were particles of dust rolled up by the blood of the Bráhman.[12] If a Sudra sat upon the same seat with a Bráhman, he was to be gashed in the part offending.[13]

The rights and privileges to be enjoyed by the Bráhman in the state were of a very high character, but were scarcely connected with the idea of nobility. The Raja was to appoint a Bráhman to be chief over all the Ministers; and in him the Raja was to place his fullest confidence.[14] The Raja was to appoint one Bráhman to be his Purohita, or family priest; and another Bráhman to be his Ritwij or performer of sacrifices.[15] The administration of justice was to be largely entrusted to the Bráhmans, and a court of four Bráhmans was called the Court of Brahma, or the Court of four faces; the god Brahma being always represented with four faces, corresponding to the four Vedas, of which he was said to be the author.[16] Treasure trove was to be divided between the Raja and the Bráhmans; but if a Bráhman found the treasure none of it went to the Raja.[17] The property of Bráhmans was never to be escheated by the Raja. On failure of heirs the wealth of all other castes might be taken by the Raja; but that of the Bráhman was to be divided amongst his caste.[18] Above all, the Bráhman, provided he was learned in the Veda, was to enjoy a perfect immunity from taxation. Under no circumstances whatever was a Raja to levy a tax upon such a Bráhman, or permit him to be hungry. On the other hand, the Raja was to provide for the maintenance of the Bráhman, and protect him as a father protects a son.[19]

As regards the mode of life to be followed by a Bráhman, it is laid down in the code that he hight gain his subsistence by lawful gleaning and gathering, by what was given to him in alms,

[12] Manu, iv. 166—168.
[13] Ib. viii. 281.
[14] Ib. vii. 58, 59.
[15] Ib. vii. 78.
[16] Ib. viii. 1, 9, 11.
[17] Ib. viii. 37—39.
[18] Ib. ix. 188, 189.
[19] Ib. vii. 133—135.

and by tillage. He was, however, to receive no gifts whatever from bad men or from Sudras. If deeply distressed he might support life by traffic and money lending, but never by service which is styled dog-living.[20] If unable to subsist as a Bráhman, he might adopt the profession of a Kshatriya or Vaisya; but he was to avoid tilling the earth, for the iron-mouthed pieces of wood wounded the earth and the creatures dwelling in it. In like manner he was not to sell flesh-meat, or spirituous liquors, or other articles which are expressly prohibited.[21] A Bráhman was never to indulge in any sensual gratification, nor follow any pursuit which might impede his reading the Veda; but he was to bring his apparel, his discourse, and his frame of mind to a conformity with his age, his occupation, his property, his divine knowledge, and his family. He was not to eat with his wife, nor to look at her while she was eating. He was never to dwell in a city which was governed by a Raja who was a Sudra; nor in one surrounded by men who neglected their duties; nor in one abounding with professed heretics; nor in one swarming with low-born outcastes. He was never to play at dice; nor gain wealth by music, or by any act which pleased the sense.[22]

As regards diet the precepts of Manu are explicit, although somewhat contradictory. A Bráhman was to carefully avoid all garlic, onions, leeks, and mushrooms; all bad milk; and all rice and bread which had not been first offered to some deity.[23] "Beasts and birds", says Manu, "may be slain by Bráhmans for sacrifice, since Agastya did this of old; and no doubt in the funeral sacrifices by holy men, and in oblations by Bráhmans and Kshatriyas, the flesh of such beasts and birds as might be legally eaten, was presented to the gods. A Bráhman, however, should never eat the flesh of cattle which has not been consecrated by mantras; but should he earnestly desire to taste such meat, he may gratify his fancy by forming the image of some beasts with dough or chickened ghee."[24]

The general ordinances laid down by Manu, as regards the diet of the twice-born castes, is characterized throughout by that extraordinary spirit of compromise between opposite institutions and usages, which so largely prevails throughout the

[20] Ib. iv. 1, 6; xi. 194—197; xiii. [21] Ib. x. 81—89.
[22] Ib. iv. 15—84. [23] Ib. v. 5—10. [24] Ib. v. 36—42.

code. That milk and vegetables were considered as the staple of Brahmanical food seems to be proved by the prohibition as regards bad milk and particular vegetables, from which all Bráhmans are called upon to abstain. In like manner flesh-meat would appear to be considered as the staple food of other twice-born men, namely, the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, from the prohibitions as regards particular animals and birds, from which all twice-born men should abstain. This conclusion is not perhaps logically proved, inasmuch as all twice-born men, including Bráhmans as well as Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, are required to abstain from particular flesh and birds. Indeed, in Bengal there are many Bráhmans in the present day, who eat the meat which has been offered to Durgá or Káli. But according to the national idea the Bráhman is supposed to live on milk and vegetables, whilst the Kshatriya and Vaisya may eat mutton and goats' flesh; and this idea finds full expression in the precepts of Manu, although the attempt to arrive at a compromise between the conflicting usages renders the language somewhat equivocal. That flesh-meat was repugnant to Manu is manifest from the condemnation which he pronounces against every one who is connected, however remotely, with the slaughter of an animal, either by consenting to it, or killing the animal, or cutting it up, or selling the flesh, or buying it, or cooking it, or serving it up, or eating it. Even whilst admitting that no sin is committed by eating flesh-meat after it has been[25] offered to the gods and Pitris, Manu declares that the man who abstains from it, will obtain a reward equal to that of a man who has performed a hundred Aswamedhas.[26] But still it was only natural that the Brahmanical lawgiver should exhibit some amount of toleration towards the usages of those twice-born men, to whom the Bráhmans chiefly looked for presents and maintenance. Moreover, he had to deal with another difficulty, namely, the old animal sacrifices of the Vedic period, and to defend those sacrifices from the denunciations of the Buddhists. Accordingly, notwithstanding the simple character of the offerings to the gods and Pitris in treating of religious duties, he does permit and even enjoin sacrifices of cattle on certain occasions, and allow twice-born men to eat the flesh-meat which has been

[25] Ib. v. 11—18; 48—53.

[26] Ib. v. 54.

thus consecrated.[27] Other texts carry the spirit of toleration still further. Manu declares that there is no sin in lawfully eating flesh-meat, in drinking wine, and in caressing women, as all men are prone to those enjoyments; but he adds that men who refrain from such enjoyments will obtain a signal reward in another life.[28] The simplicity of Manu upon those points is truly charming, and the doctrine is not unwnown in western systems of morality. It may be put in the following form. Certain pleasures are lawful, but still they are pleasures; if therefore a man abstain from such pleasures now, he will enjoy other pleasures hereafter. It should however be added that later Brahmanical legislators prohibited altogether the use of flesh-meat, either at entertainments to guests, or at the Sráddhas, or feasts of the dead; on the ground that whilst they were permitted in the earlier ages of mankind, they were forbidden in the present age of Káli.[29]

The scale of punishments in cases of slander furnishes a still more distinct idea of the caste system as conceived in the time of the code. A Kshatriya who slandered a Bráhman was to be fined a hundred panas; for the same crime a Vaisya was to be fined a hundred and fifty or two hundred panas, but a Sudra was to be whipped.[30] On the other hand, if a Bráhman slandered a Kshatriya he was to be fined fifty panas; if he slandered a Vaisya he was to be fined twenty-five panas; but if he slandered a Sudra he was only to be fined twelve panas. If, however, a Sudra insulted any man of the twice-born castes with gross invectives he was to have his tongue slit; if he mentioned the name and caste of the individual with contumely, an iron style ten fingers long was to be made red-hot and thrust into his mouth; and if through pride he dared to instruct a Bráhman respecting his duty, the Raja was to order that hot oil should be poured into his mouth and ear.[31]

In addition to these four castes there were a large number of outcastes, of whom the lowest were called Chandálas. The

[27] Manu, v. 26—48. [28] Ib. v. 56.

[29] See Manu, appendix to the English translation.

[30] The pana was a copper weight, or a copper coin, of about 200 grains; and was probably equivalent to the modern piece, or something less than a half-penny. See Princep's *Essays*.

[31] Manu, viii. 266—276.

Chandálas were said to be the sons of a Sudra by a Brahman woman;[32] but probably they merely formed the lowest class of the community, and the origin of such hated unions as those indicated were condemned to belong to that class. "Chandálas", says Manu, "must dwell without the town. Their sole wealth must be dogs and assess; their clothes must consist of the mantles of deceased persons; their dishes must be broken pots; and their ornaments must consist of rusty iron. No one who regards his duties must hold any intercourse with them; and they must marry only amongst themselves. By day they may roam about for the purposes of work, and be distinguished by the badges of the Raja; and they must carry out the corpse of any one who dies without kindred. They should always be employed to slay those who are sentenced by the law to be put to death; and they may take the clothes of the slain, their beds, and their ornaments."[33]

It is scarcely necessary to add, that subsequent to the time of Manu the number of castes became largely increased, and every hereditary calling became regarded as a separate caste. But still every Hindu is regarded as belonging to one or other of the four great castes; or else to one of those dubious classes of the community, which has caste laws of its own, although they cannot be referred to either of the four great castes which are specified by Manu.

[32] Manu, s. 12, 29, 30. [33] Ib. x. 51—58.

CHAPTER XI

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

Two of the main objects which the compilers of the Brahmanical code appear to have had in view have now been unfolded, namely :

1st, The authoritative promulgation of a ritual which should include the polytheistic worship of the Vedic deities, and at the same time superadd the dogma of rewards and punishments in association with the monotheistic worship of the god Brahma.

2nd, To enforce a strict code of caste laws, which should for ever separate the twice-born castes from the Sudras, whilst etablishing the ascendancy of the Brahmanical hierarchy over the whole.

A third and equally important measure may now be taken into consideration; namely, the grand effort to map out the life of every man of the twice-born castes into four distinct periods, corresponding to four distinct phases of human existence ; that of a student, a householder, a hermit, and a devotee. The object of this extraordinary division of individual existence seems to have been to bring every action of civil and family life into the area of religious duty. That such an arbitrary disposition of the individual should be universally accepted could scarcely be expected. The student may be eager to throw off the restrictions of pupilage, and to undertake the duties of a husband and a father ; but the householder, as he advances in years, is not always prepared to sacrifice his domestic happiness for the sake of becoming a hermit or a devotee. Still the system of the four orders, as it is called, is universally recognised by the Hindus ; and as the pious householder finds old age creeping upon him, he devotes more and more time and thought to his religious duties, with the view of approximating his life as far as possible with that of a devotee ; and with the hope that in so doing he may expiate his sins by penances and good works, and obtain after death a happier existence in the next state of being. In other words, the ideal of Brahmanical life is always before the

Hindu, and indeed is pleasing to his imagination. As a student the Bráhman must acquire a perfect knowledge of his duties; as a householder he must practise all those duties in the character of a married man and the father of a household; as a hermit he must mortify his body by penances and religious austerities; and as a devotee he must pass his remaining years in the contemplation of that Divine Essence in which he hopes to be ultimately absorbed, or of that Divine Spirit with whom he hopes ultimately to dwell.

The names of these four orders are as follows: 1st, The Brahmachári, or student in the Veda. 2nd, The Grihastha, or married man and householder. 3rd, The Vánaprastha, or hermit. 4th, Sannyási, or devotee.

The life of a Brahmachári commences from the day of investiture with the thread; but prior to that ceremony certain rites are ordained, which are performed without the concurrence or knowledge of the child, and which are devoid of all historical significance. These rites consist in the purification of the babe, the giving it a name, the feeding it with rice in the sixth month from its birth, and the shaving of the head.[1] But the investiture with the thread is of the utmost importance in the life of the twice-born. The thread is the symbol which distinguishes the twice-born man from the Sudra; and the investiture is a second birth, which introduces the twice-born youth to a religious life, and sanctifies him for the study of the Veda.

As regards the ceremony itself, a pleasing illustration is to be found in the story of the childhood of Ráma; but some important additional data are furnished by the code of Manu. The thread of the Bráhman is made of cotton, and is put over the head in three strings. The thread of the Kshatriya is made of hemp; but in more ancient times it seems to have been made of a strip of antelope's skin.[2] The thread of the Vaisya is made of

[1] Manu, ii. 27—35.

[2] See the narrative of the investiture of Ráma, in the Ramayana. There are several allusions, to the antelope, both in the Epics and in Manu, which seem to indicate that it was regarded as a sacred animal by the Vedic Aryans. It was not only frequently sacrificed to Vedic deities, but Manu states that the land on which the black antelope grazes is held fit for sacrifice; and thus he seems to lay down a distinction between the land of the Aryans and the land of Mlechhas. Manu, ii. 23.

wool. Considerable latitude is allowed as regards the age at which the ceremony should take place. The investiture ought to be carried out in the eighth year of a Bráhman, the eleventh year of a Kshatriya, and the twelfth year of a Vaisya. It might, however, be performed as early as the fifth year of a Bráhman, the sixth year of a Kshatriya, and the eighth year of a Vaisya. But on no account was it to be delayed beyond the sixteenth year of Bráhmans, the twenty-second year of Kshatriyas, or the twenty-fourth year of Vaisyas. The reason for this differential scale probably lay in the fact that it was considered more incumbent on the young Bráhman to commence the study of the Veda at an early age than for the Kshatriya or Vaisya. If a twice-born youth passed the allotted age without investiture he was virtually excommunicated, and became an out-caste. He was degraded from the Gáyatri ; in other words, he was not permitted to offer up that prayer, which a twice-born man was alone permitted to utter. He was in fact treated as an impure man with whom no Bráhman would form a connection.[3]

The most significant point in Manu's account of the investiture with the sacred thread is the ceremony of begging for alms.[4] On the day of investiture, the youth was to take his staff, and stand opposite to the Sun ; this last rite being perhaps a relic of the ancient Sun worship. The youth was next to walk round the fire and beg for alms; and this ceremony is still performed by twice-born boys of every degree, by the son of a Raja as well as by the son of a Vaisya. In the case of a Bráhman youth, this begging for alms is not confined to the day of investiture, but may be carried on day by day throughout the whole period of student life; and in this manner the Brahmachári is supposed to maintain both himself and his religious preceptor. But in the case of the Kshatriya or the Vaisya, the ceremony of begging is merely formal, and is confined to the day of investiture. At the present time the ceremony is performed precisely as it is described in the story of the investiture of Ráma and his brethren. The day is one of festivity. All the friends and rela-

[3] Manu, ii. 36—40. Other details are added concerning the girdle, staff, and mantle of men of the three twice-born castes ; but they are of no historical significance, and are mere matters of ceremonial law.

[4] Manu, ii. 48—51.

tions gather together to witness the ceremony; and one and all are generally moved by that deep sympathy with childhood which is a special characteristic of the Hindu. The mother, the sisters, and the aunts are all anxious that the young neophyte should acquit himself with grace and dignity; and they all in turn give alms in food according to the simple ritual. Meantime humble friends and dependents are also admitted, and give their dole to the youthful mendicant as a mark of respect to the whole family and an honour to themselves.

The origin of this strange rite is somewhat obscure. The idea especially of a son of a Raja collecting alms of food finds no expression in the Rig-Veda, and seems to have originated in the teachings of Buddha; but whether it is a relic of Brahmanism or Buddhism is a question which can be best decided after a consideration of the state of the Hindu world at the advent of Buddha.

The only point remaining for consideration is the purification of daughters. Manu directs that the same ceremonies should be performed for girls as are ordained for sons, but without either the utterance of sacred mantras, or the investiture with the sacred thread. Indeed, the nuptial ceremony in the case of girls is considered as taking the place of the investiture of the thread, and is the commencement of the religious life of the female.[5]

The rules for the conduct of a Brahmachári after investiture may now be taken under consideration. The main object of these rules was to discipline every youth of the twice-born castes in the habitual discharge of every religious observance; and above all, to bring his reason under the perfect control of a faith which admits of no dispute, and which hears and obeys without a question or a murmur. This process is carried on during a period when the affections are the strongest and the mind the most impressible, and if at the same time the passions are kept under strict control by sacred study, by abstinence from all self-indulgence, as well as by daily worship of the gods and daily service rendered towards his preceptor, the student is soon imbued with a deep religious enthusiasm, and regards his preceptor with a reverential regard far exceeding that which pertains to any other form of religious or moral training. No absolute

[5] Manu, ii. 66, 67.

term of years is fixed for the discipline of student life. According to the code, it may be extended over thirty-six years, or eighteen years, or nine years, or until the student perfectly understands the Veda.[6] At the same time rules are laid down for those who are desirous of continuing the religious life of a Brahmachári throughout the whole term of existence. If the preceptor died first, the student for life was to attend upon his son, or upon his widow, or upon one of his paternal kinsmen, paying in either case the same respect which he had paid to his deceased master. Should, however, neither a son, nor the widow, nor a deceased kinsman be alive, the student was to take the place of the preceptor, and occupy his station, and maintain the sacred fires which he had consecrated.[7] The result of these rules is that even in the present day there are Bráhman students, or disciples, who devote their whole lives to sacred study and religious observances in the hermitage of an honoured and loved preceptor.

The duties of the Brahmachári which are more immediately connected with religion, have been already described in the chapter devoted to the religion of the Bráhmans.[8] It consists in the reverent reading of the Veda in the attitude of worship, and the daily worship of the gods; and to this must be added the conduct of a Brahmachári towards his preceptor, and the control which he was constantly to maintain over his passions. The reverential study of the Veda was to begin and end each day with the three suppressions of the breath, and the utterance of the three mystic letters known as AUM, the three mystic words known as the Vyáhritis, and the three mystic measures known as the Gáyatri; and it was also to begin and end with the ceremony of clasping the feet of the preceptor as a token of worship. Equal in importance to the study of the Veda was the daily worship of the gods at morning, noon, and night. The Brahmachári was first to purify himself with water, and then to repeat the Gáyatri, with all his organs under control, and his attention fixed on the Supreme Being. This act of worship was to be especially performed at sun-rise and sun-set; and should the sun rise or set while the student was

[6] Manu, iii. 1.
[7] Ib. ii. 243, 244, 247, 249.
[8] See *ante*, Chap. vii.

asleep, he was to fast and repeat the Gáyatri throughout an entire day. In like manner, day by day, the Brahmachári was to bathe and purify himself, and then to present the appointed offerings to the Devatas, the Rishis, and the Pitris; and to worship the images of the deities, and bring wood for the maintenance of the sacred fire. He was also to bring all that was required by his preceptor for the performance of religious rites, namely, pots of water, flowers, fresh earth, and the sacred kusa grass.[9]

As regards preceptors, it should be remarked that Manu lays down three different classes of Bráhmans, namely, the Achárya, the Upádhyayá, and the Ritwij.[10]

The Achárya is pre-eminently the spiritual preceptor of the young Bráhman. He is, or should be, the perfect master of the whole Veda. It is he who invests the Brahmachári with the sacrificial thread, and then imparts to him a knowledge of the four Vedas, with their respective Bráhmanas, or sacrificial codes, and Upanishads, or metaphysical teachings. It is this venerated preceptor who should be diligently served by his disciple; and who should indeed be supported by the daily mendicancy of the youthful Bráhman, who lives beneath his roof, and attends him as an affectionate and obedient pupil.

The Upádhyayá is a kind of sub-lecturer, or school-master, who is said to instruct his pupils as a means of livelihood, and who teaches the six Vedángas, which are as follows: 1st, Śikshá, or pronunciation. 2nd, Chhandas, or metre. 3rd, Vyákarana, or grammer. 4th, Nirukta, or explanation of words. 5th, Jyotisha, or astronomy and astrology. 6th, Kalpa, or ceremonial.[11]

The Ritwij is the sacrificer, or priest properly so called, who receives a stipend for preparing the holy fire and conducting sacrifices. In the more elaborate ritual of an earlier period, the priests who appear to have served in the great sacrificial sessions, were divided into different classes according to their respective capacities. This classification, however, is merely

[9] Manu, ii. 70—87, 176, 182. [10] Ib. ii. 140—143.

[11] For a learned account of the six Vedángas, see Max Müller's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, page 109 *et seq.*

illustrative of the ancient ritual of the Brahmanas, and is otherwise devoid of all historical significance.

The student was bound on all occasions to show respect to his preceptor, and to salute him first at every meeting, whether the teacher was a Bráhman or otherwise, and whether the instruction received was popular, ceremonial, or sacred.[12] This law has left a lasting impress upon the national mind; and all who have ever imparted instruction to youthful Hindus will be able to testify to their docility and good manners, and to their special anxiety to give no offence. Manu, with a singular knowledge of human nature, has also ordained that the student is never to imitate the gait, speech, or manner of his preceptor. Should the student hear any censorious discourse respecting his preceptor, he was either to cover his ears, or to move to another place. Should he venture to censure his preceptor, however justly, he would be born again as an ass; should he defame his preceptor falsely he would be born a dog; should he take the goods of his preceptor without leave he would be born a small worm; should he envy the merit of his preceptor he would be born an insect or reptile.[13]

The remaining important point in the training of the Brahmachári was the maintenance of a strict control over the passions. "A wise man," says Manu, "will restrain his organs as a charioteer restrains restless horses. Desire is not satisfied by enjoyment any more than the sacrificial fire is appeased by ghee, but rather will blaze more vehemently. The man who resigns all the pleasures of sense is better than the man who enjoys them all. The man who devotes himself to sensual gratifications can never procure happiness, either by the Vedas, or by alms, or by sacrifices, or by rigid observances, or by pious austerities; for if a single organ obtain the mastery, his knowledge of divine things passes away, as water flows away through a single hole in a leathern bottle." [14] Under these general rules the Brahmachári is strictly enjoined to abstain from honey, flesh-meat, perfumes, chaplets of flowers, gaming, music, dancing, and from wantonly looking upon women.[15] He must,

[12] Manu, ii. 117.
[13] Ib. ii. 194—201.
[14] Ib. ii. 88, 94, 96, 97, 99.
[15] Ib. ii. 177—179.

however, salute the wives of his preceptor, but he must render them no personal service; and he must never sit in a sequestered place, even with his nearest female relatives, "lest desire should snatch wisdom from the wise."[16]

In connection, however, with these strict rules, there is a curious disquisition in the Brahmanical code upon earthly happiness, which terminates in the material conclusion that the chief temporal good consists in the union of virtue, wealth, and lawful pleasure.[17] Perhaps a higher tone of moral sentiment might have been expected from a divine lawgiver; but whatever may be the ostensible idea of the day, the bulk of mankind appear to be still actuated by the principle laid down by the old Hindu legislator.

When a twice-born had passed through the order of Brahmachári, or religious student, he entered that of a Grihastha, or married man and householder. Here it should be remarked that marriage is an obligation in the eyes of the Hindu lawgiver which he never fails to enforce. Even in the case of Bráhmans he seems to consider it as incumbent upon every man to marry a wife, as it is to study the Veda or worship the gods; for he specifies three debts that all men are bound to satisfy, namely, that to the Rishis by the study of the Veda, that to the gods by the offering of sacrifices, and that to Pitris, or ancestors, by begetting a son.[18] This obligation of begetting a son originated in the ancient belief, which finds expression both in Hindu and Greek mythology, that after the death of a father the services of a son were necessary to offer water and cakes to the ghost of the deceased parent. Having thus established marriage as an institution by the strongest of all religious obligations, namely, the happiness of parents in a future state, the Hindu lawgiver lays down certain rules for insuring a strong and healthy offspring to every marriage union. He indicates with tolerable clearness

[16] Manu, ii. 210—215.

[17] Ib. ii. 224.

[18] Ib. iv. 257. In another text, however, reference is made to thousands of Bráhmans who have avoided all sensuality, and have consequently left no families. Manu, ii. 249 ; v. 159. From this it would appear that the Bráhmans represented some of the more famous Buddhist teachers as being Bráhman sages, in the same way that they represented the old Vedic Rishis as belonging to their order.

the age at which a young man should marry; the degrees of relationship in which a man and woman should not marry; the families from which a man ought not to take a wife; and even the damsel whose moral or physical defects might prevent her from finding favour in the eyes of a husband. He then proceeds to describe the model damsel whom a young man should marry; and winds up with a very brief notice of the marriage ceremony.

These laws and precepts may be considered under four different heads; and will be found to illustrate the national ideas of marriage which still prevail among the Hindus. These four heads are as follows: 1st, Ceremonies at the close of student-life. 2nd, Prohibited marriages. 3rd, Qualified damsels. 4th, Marriage ceremonies.

The ceremonies connected with the return of a Brahmachári to his father's house would seem to indicate that the Hindu lawgiver was in no way cognizant of infant marriages as far as the bridegroom was concerned. No mention is made of early betrothals, and every man of the twice-born castes is directed to marry at the termination of his life as a student. Manu says: "A man aged thirty may marry a girl of twelve; a man aged twenty-four may marry a girl of eight; but if his duties would be otherwise impeded let him marry immediately."[19] It is, moreover, easy to infer from the regulations as regards the conduct of a Brahmachári towards the wife of his preceptor, and from the specified periods of student-life, that twice-born men could rarely have been married before they had attained a full marriageable age. Under such circumstances the return of the Brahmachári to his father's house involved a family festivity. The studies of the neophyte had been brought to a conclusion. The sweets of married life were all before him. Manu, accordingly, enjoins that the student should be praised by his preceptor, and honourably welcomed by his father. That he should be seated on a couch and decked with flowers as the hero of the occasion. Above all, that he should be presented with a cow.[20] Now, the possession of a cow by a Hindu in a rural village is a sign of comparative affluence, whilst the animal itself is worshipped and reverenced as a deity. It furnishes the primitive luxuries, the milk, the butter, and the curds, which are so grateful to the

[19] Manu, ix. 94. [20] Ib. iii. 3, 4.

Hindus; and it is the living representative of the prolific earth-goddess, the type of the beautiful Lakshmi, who is the wife of Vishnu and the goddess of all prosperity. When, therefore, a young man possessed a cow, it was only natural that he should dream of possessing a bride.

As regards prohibited marriages, Manu directed that a man should not marry a wife whose family name indicated that she had descended from the same family stem as his father or mother, or who was in the sixth degree of relationship.[21] Again, a twice-born man was never to take a wife from a family which had omitted to fulfil its religious duties, or had produced no sons, or in which the Veda had not been read, or which was distinguished by thick hair on the body, or which was subject to consumption, indigestion, epilepsy, leprosy, or elephantiasis. Here it should be remarked that Manu distinctly classifies the non-observance of religious duty, and neglect of the Veda, with physical defects, such as leprosy and elephantiasis. Thus, whilst the young student, fresh from the instructions and discipline imparted by his preceptor, was effectually restrained from marrying a wife out of an irreligious family, a strong pressure was placed upon heretics and unbelievers to observe their religious duties and devote some time to the reading of the Veda, lest their daughters should remain unmarried. Some of the laws as regards constitutional debility are amusing from their frank simplicity. To refrain from marrying a damsel because her father had a weak digestion, might be a prudent measure; but the law would bear rather hardly upon the weaker sex, inasmuch as a damsel could scarcely refuse to be given to a husband, whatever might be the state of his digestive organs. The restriction against marrying a girl because her family was distinguished by thick hair on the body, seems somewhat inexplicable. It probably originated in the current Oriental idea that thick hair on the body denoted strong passions; and such tendencies on the part of women are always regarded by Hindus with peculiar aversion, and are often denounced by Indian moralists with a bitterness which is scarcely fair.

Manu's list of damsels whom a man is forbidden to marry, is equally curious. He says: "A twice-born man should not

[21] Manu, iii. 5.

marry a girl with red hair, nor one with a deformed limb, nor one troubled with habitual sickness, nor one without hair, nor one with too much hair, nor one who talks too much, nor one with inflamed eyes. Neither should he marry a girl with the name of a constellation, or a tree, or a river, or a barbarous nation, or a mountain, or a winged creature, or a snake, or a slave, or with any name which raises an image of terror. Neither should he marry a girl who has no brother, lest her father should take her first-born son as his own to offer the funeral cakes; nor one whose father is not well known, lest an illicit marriage should already have been contracted between the girl and another man."[22] The last two laws seem to call for some explanation. It was ruled that every man ought to have a son, who should perform the funeral rites of his father, and present his spirit on stated occasions with cakes and libations. If a man had no son, but only a daughter, he might adopt the first-born son of his daughter, and thus perchance leave his daughter's husband childless. Accordingly a twice-born man was prohibited from marrying a girl who had no brothers, lest after becoming a father he should find himself virtually childless. The remaining law is significant in another direction. The sentiment with regard to female purity is very strong amongst the Hindus. A damsel who has been once betrothed is regarded as ineligible for marriage to another, even if no consummation has taken place. Accordingly Manu directs that a twice-born man should never marry a damsel whose father was not well known, lest an illicit marriage should have been previously contracted.

As regards damsels who are qualified to become the wives of twice-born men, Manu lays down the following precepts: "A man of the three twice-born castes should choose a girl for his wife whose form is without defect, who has an agreeable name, who walks gracefully like a young elephant, who has a moderate quantity of hair, whose teeth are of a moderate size, and whose body is exquisitely soft."[23] This description of a qualified Hindu female is sufficiently general without being too particular; but like the list of prohibited families and prohibited damsels, it is strangely wanting in that sentiment which prevails

[22] Manu, iii. 8, 9.
[23] Ib. iii. 10.

in the traditions of the Kshatriyas. Moreover, there is an opposition between the Kshatriya ideal and the Brahmanical ideal, which is worth noting. The conception which appears to have floated before the fancy of a Kshatriya bard was that of a fair or golden complexioned nymph, graceful and retiring, delicate and slender-waisted. The later Puránic bards were more materialistic and sensuous, and their ideal was that of a young damsel who walked, as Manu says, like a young elephant, and who was moreover endowed with all the exuberant charms of maturer years. In other words, the Kshatriyas loved fair and graceful women, and sought to be loved in return, after the manner of young and chivalrous warriors; whilst the later Bráhmans were as devoid of sentiment as monks shut out from the world by the bars of their cells, and indulged in dreams of voluptuous forms that merely pleased the senses and provoked desire.

The marriage ceremonies of the Hindus are but very briefly indicated by Manu, probably because they were considered to be so well known as to render details unnecessary. It is simply ordained that when the bridegroom is of the same caste as the bride he should take her hand before the altar.[24] It may, however, be as well to indicate in the present place the leading rites in the marriage ceremony, such as are performed in the present day, and which appear to have been handed down from time immemorial. These rites are eleven in number, namely: 1st, The procession of the bridegroom to the house of the father of the bride. 2nd, The hospitable reception of the bridegroom. 3rd, The gift of the bride by her father to the bridegroom. 4th, The binding together of the hands of the bride and bridegroom with kusa grass. 5th, The gift of a waistcloth and mantle by the bridegroom to the bride. 6th, The tying together of the skirts of the mantles of the bride and bridegroom. 7th, The oblations of the bridegroom to the god Agni or "Fire," and the dropping of the rice on the fire by the bride. 8th, The hand of the bride solemnly taken by the bridegroom in marriage. 9th, The steps of the bride on a stone and muller, the domestic implement for grinding spices and condiments. 10th, The walk of the bride round the nuptial fire. 11th, The seven steps in seven circles, which the bride is directed to take by the bridegroom;

[24] Manu, iii. 43.

the seventh step rendering the marriage complete and irrevocable.

The precepts which refer to the domestic life of the Grihastha, or householder, are characterized by the same minuteness of detail as those which refer to his marriage duties and religious observances. During the most responsible period in the life of man, when he is discharging all the onerous obligations of a husband, a father, and the master of a household, he is virtually deprived of all independence, and compelled to regulate his daily life by a code of authoritative law, which brings almost every one of his acts within the sphere either of merits or demerits, to be punished or rewarded hereafter according to the balance of the sum total of the one over the sum total of the other. These ordinances might be considered under the two heads of means of livelihood and moral conduct; but the former have already been indicated in the preceding chapter on the four castes, whilst the moral rules find general expression in the Brahmanical system. It may, however, be remarked that the precepts respecting means of livelihood refer, not so much to the twice-born castes generally, as to the Bráhmans alone. Indeed, the occupations of the two other twice-born castes were sufficiently known and acknowledged. The Kshatriyas were the rulers and defenders of the community. As soldiers they were maintained by the state, and also were occasionally in a position to acquire lands and riches by foreign conquest. The Vaisyas, again, maintained themselves by merchandise; and in the Buddhist period such merchants became an important part of the community, and carried their goods from city to city in hundreds of waggons. But the Bráhmans had no ostensible calling save their religious duties as preceptors and priests; and Manu endeavoured to place them as far as possible upon an independent footing, by setting forth the duty of Kshatriyas and Vaisyas to present alms and gifts to the Bráhmans, not merely as a religious obligation, but as a privilege only accorded to worthy and virtuous men. The compilers of the code, however, appear to have been fearful lest the Bráhmans should sink to the position of sordid mendicants; and specially enjoined that the Bráhman should avoid the habit of begging, since by taking many gifts the divine light soon fades away from the soul.[25]

[25] Manu, iv. 186.

The third and fourth orders, of Vánaprastha and Sannyási, or hermit and devotee, are frequently recognized in the Epics, and express the very essence of Brahmanism. These two orders, although apparently similar as regards external life, present some striking points of difference as regards internal life, with reference to the objects to be respectively gained by each mode of living. Thus the Vánaprastha, or hermit, devoted his time to religious austerities with the view of mortifying his passions. The Sannyási, or devotee, is supposed, on the other hand, to have overcome all, the desires of the flesh; and therefore devoted the remainder of his days to religious contemplation, with the view of attaining final beatitude. The latter object was indeed kept in view by men belonging to either order; but was more immediately the aim of the Sannyási. The duties of these two orders may now be indicated as follows.

Manu says: "When the twice-born man has remained in the order of Grihastha, or householder, until his muscles become flaccid, and his hair grey, and he sees a child of his child, let him abandon his household and repair to the forest, and dwell there in the order of Vánaprastha, or hermit. He should be accompanied by his wife, if she choose to attend him, but otherwise he should commit her to the care of his sons. He should take with him the consecrated fire, and all the domestic implements for making oblations to the fire, and there dwell in the forest, with perfect control over all his organs; and here day by day he should perform the five sacraments with many sorts of pure food, such as holy sages used to eat, with green herbs, roots, and fruit. He should wear a black antelope's hide, or a vesture of bark, and bathe morning and evening: and he should suffer his nails, and the hair of his head and beard, to grow continually. He should make offerings from such food as he himself may eat, and give alms to the utmost of his power; and he should honour all those who visit his hermitage with presents of water, roots, and fruit. He should be constantly engaged in reading the Veda; he should be patient in all extremities; he should be universally benevolent, and entertain a tender affection for all living creatures; his mind should be ever intent on the Supreme Being; and he should be a perpetual giver of gifts, but not a receiver.[26]

[26] Manu, vi. 1—8. Vishnu Purána, iii. 9.

He should slide backwards and forwards on the ground; or stand a whole day on tip-toe; or continue in motion by rising and sitting alternately; but every day at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset he should go to the waters and bathe. In the hot season he should sit exposed to five fires, namely, four blazing around him, whilst the sun is burning above him; in the rainy season he should stand uncovered without even a mantle, while the clouds pour down their heaviest showers; in the cold season he should wear damp vesture. He should increase the austerity of his devotion by degrees, until by enduring harsher and harsher mortifications he has dried up his bodily frame." [27]

As regards the life to be pursued by a Sannyási, Manu lays down the following direction :

"When a Bráhman has thus lived in the forest during the third portion of his life as a Vánaprastha, he should for the fourth portion of it become a Sannyási, and abandon all sensual affections, and repose wholly in the Supreme Spirit. When a Bráhman has reposited in his mind the sacrificial fires, he may proceed direct from the second order, or that of Grihastha, or even from the first order, or that of Brahmachári, to the fourth order, or that of Sannyási. The glory of that Bráhman who passes from the order of Grihastha to that of Sannyási illuminates the higher worlds. He should take an earthen water-pot, dwell at the roots of large trees, wear coarse vesture, abide in total solitude, and exhibit a perfect equanimity towards all creatures. He should wish neither for death nor for life: but expect his appointed time, as a hired servant expects his wages. He should look down as he advances his foot, lest he should touch anything impure. He should drink water that has been purified by straining through a cloth, lest he hurt an insect. He should, if he speaks at all, utter words that are purified by truth. He should by all means keep his heart pure. He should bear a reproachful speech with patience, and speak reproachfully to no man; and he should never utter a word relating to vain illusory things. He should delight in meditating on the Supreme Spirit, and sit fixed in such meditation, without needing anything earthly, without one sensual desire, and without any companion but his own soul." [28]

[27] Manu, vi. 22—32. Vishnu Purána, iii. 9. [28] Ib. vi. 22—31.

"The Bráhman who has become a Sannyási should at no time gain his subsistence by explaining omens and prodigies; nor by skill in astrology and palmistry; nor by casuistry and expositions of holy texts. He should not go near a house which is frequented by Vánaprasthas, or Bráhmans, or birds, or dogs, or other beggars. The vessels on which he should receive food are a gourd, a wooden bowl, an earthen dish, or a basket made of reeds. He should only ask for food once a day, and that should be in the evening, when the smoke of the kitchen fires has ceased, when the pestle lies motionless, when the burning charcoal is extinguished, when people have eaten, and when dishes are removed. If he fails to obtain food he should not be sorrowful; if he succeed in obtaining it he should not be glad. He should only care to obtain a sufficiency to support life, and he should not be anxious about his utensils. He should not habituate himself to eat much at a time; for if a Sannyási habituates himself to eat much, he becomes inclined to sensual gratification.[29]

"A Sannyási should reflect on the transmigrations of men which are caused by their sinful deeds; on their downfall into a region of darkness, and their torments in the mansions of Yama; on their separation from those whom they love, and their union with those whom they hate; on their strength overpowered by old age, and their bodies racked with disease; on their agonizing departure from this corporeal frame, and their formation again in the womb; on the misery attached to embodied spirits from a violation of their duties, and the imperishable bliss which attaches to embodied spirits who have abundantly performed every duty.[30]

"A Sannyási should also reflect with all the powers of his mind on the subtle indivisible essence of the Supreme Spirit, and its complete existence in all beings, whether extremely high or extremely low.[31]

"The body is a mansion, with bone for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for mortar; with skin for its outward covering; and filled with no sweet perfumes, but loaded with refuse. It is a mansion infested by age and by sorrow; the seat of diseases; harassed with pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing

[29] Manu, vi. 32—49.
[30] Ib. vi. 61—64.
[31] Ib. vi. 65.

long. Such a mansion of the vital soul should always be quitted with cheerfulness by its occupier.[32]

It will now be seen from the foregoing precepts that in all essentials the life of the Sannyási resembled that of the Buddhist priest; and hence it may be inferred, that whilst the compilers of the code of Manu were consistent in their denunciations against atheism and heresy, they exhibited a toleration, very much resembling that which was displayed by the Roman Catholic Church, towards all fanatics and enthusiasts, and utilized them for the maintenance of the supremacy of Brahmanism. This spirit of inclusion was doubtless one of the causes of the success which attended the rise of the Brahmanical hierarchy. Whilst the Bráhmans represented the Rishis of the old Vedic times as belonging to their own order, they held out the hand of religious fellowship to those devotees, who would otherwise have sought for rest under the shadow of Buddhistic heresy.

Such, then, was the ideal of Hindu life as understood by the ancient Bráhmans. How far it was modified by Buddhism, or associated with Buddhism, is a difficult question, which must be reserved for investigation later. One conclusion seems to be certain, that this Brahmanical ideal was not that of the Vedic Aryans, who indulged in healthy but material aspirations for a long life of physical enjoyment.[33] It was rather an ideal which originated in an elaborate belief of a future existence of the soul after the death of the body, combined with the dogma that happiness hereafter depended upon a close adherence in the present life to the arbitrary dictates of ceremonial and conventional law, and a useless concentration of the intellectual energies in contemplating mere metaphysical abstractions. In the old patriarchal time of the Vedic Aryans, men appear to have led active lives to the very last; to have taken young wives in their old age, and gathered in their harvests, and bargained their cattle and merchandise, and fought against their enemies,

[32] Manu, vi. 76, 77.

[33] There are several allusions in the Mahábhárata and Rámayana to Rajas who have spent their old age in contemplation and austerites ; but the incidents are so foreign to the main spirit of Vedic tradition, as well as to the aspirations expressed in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, that they may be regarded as mythical interpolations of a comparatively recent date.

and feasted and revelled, until perchance they drifted into dotage and sank into the inevitable tomb, to enter upon a dreary existence as ghosts or shades. But under the priestly domination of the Bráhmans, advancing age was not only regarded as a sign of decay, but as a sharp intimation that the individual was about to enter upon an existence in which he would be rewarded or punished according to the sum of his good and evil deeds in this life; and that the individual must peremptorily prepare for that future existence by turning his back upon all the pleasures of the world, and by contemplating that Supreme Spirit to whom he was about to return. These two conflicting ideas still find expression in modern humanity; and the great problem of old age appears to be how to combine the two. Each one separately considered seems to involve a departure from true wisdom; an attempt to escape from the responsibilities of existence. The man who continues to devote his old age exclusively to the pursuits of this world, seems to ignore those religious duties which are associated with a belief in the immortality of the soul; and the man who devotes his old age exclusively to religious retirement and contemplation, seems in like manner to ignore those moral duties which appertain to the father and the citizen.

CHAPTER XII

HINDU WOMEN

THE social condition of Hindu men, as members of a caste system and masters of households, has now been brought under consideration; but an important branch of inquiry yet remains for investigation, namely, the condition of Hindu women in Vedic and Brahmanic times.

In the previous chapter, which describes eight kinds of marriage, the circumstances under which marriage relations were formed in the Vedic period were brought under review; and it was seen that damsels were purchased, or won by feats of arms, or carried away captive after a victory; or a union, more or less temporary, was occasionally brought about in the old idyllic fashion, without any rite or ceremony whatever. But as far as can be gathered from the Kshatriya traditions preserved in the Epics, the two leading institutions in Vedic times were Polyandry, or the marriage of ene woman to all the brothers of a family, and the Swayamvara, or choice of a husband on the part of the maiden.

The social condition of women who have been purchased, or won by feats of arms, or carried away captive, is a question which may be safely left to the imagination of those who are familiar with the peculiar conditions of the feminine mind. It may be remarked that in general there is a latent power of adaptation to circumstances in human nature, which would speedily reconcile the female slave and captive to a change of condition; especially if the damsel found that she had really gained the affections of her new lord and master. Moreover, in a lawless age polygamy is virtually a protection to the damsel, who has been deprived of her natural protectors by the chances of war or death of kinsmen; and the services she might render in a patriarchal household, would in a great measure neutralize the jealous hatred with which she would otherwise have been regarded by the legitimate wife and mistress of a family. Unless, however, polygamy is an established institution, maintained

by the religious dogma that every man should be the father of a son, an amount of feminine influence is generally exercised by the legitimate wife, which is sufficient to curb the irregular desires of a discontented husband.[1] Indeed, it would be easy to infer that in a primitive and peaceful community, where polygamy was not recognized as an institution, and where the duty of becoming the father of a son was not regarded as a religious obligation, the free play of the affections and emotions would speedily settle the main problem connected with marriage, by generally distributing the young men and women into married pairs, bound to each other by an instinctive affection, and separated from all others by a mutual jealousy.

[1] An ancient legend is preserved in the Vishnu Purána, which treats of a submissive husband as an exceptional case occurring in a polygamous age, but at the same time sufficiently illustrates the moral strength of women. As it is given as a quotation from an ancient ballad, it may possibly be referred to the Vedic age. It may be reproduced in the following form :

"There was a certain Raja, named Jyámagha, and he was the husband of Saivyá. And Jyámagha was more submissive to his wife than any man who has ever been born, or whoever will be born ; for Saivya was barren, but her husband was sore afraid of her, and would not take another woman to be his wife. And it came to pass that Jyámagha went out to fight his enemy ; and he routed him, and drove him from the field of battle. And the daughter of the enemy was very beautiful, and she was left alone in the battle-field, and her large eyes rolled wildly with fear, and she cried out : 'Save me ! Save me !' And Jyámagha was smitten with her beauty, and he said within his heart : 'This damsel is very fair, and I have no child ; therefore I will take her to be my wife, and she shall bear me a son.' So Jyámagha took the damsel in his chariot, and drove away to his own city ; and his wife Saivyá, and all his Ministers and Chieftains, and all the people of the city, came out to meet him. And when Saivyá saw the damsel standing on the left hand of the Raja, her heart swelled within her, and she said : 'Who is this damsel ?' And the Raja was afraid, and knew not what to say ; and he replied in haste : 'This is my daughter-in-law !' Then Saivyá said : 'No son has been born unto me ; therefore tell me what son of yours is the husband of this damsel?' And the Raja replied : 'The son you have yet to bear to me, the same shall be the husband of this damsel.' At these words Saivyá smiled gently, and said : 'So let it be !' And the Raja and his wife entered the palace."

It will be seen that the foregoing legend bears a marvellous resemblance to that of the return of Agamemnon and Cassandra to Argos after the siege of Troy. Had Jyámagha proved less submissive, his wife Saivyá might have appeared in the character of Clytemnestra.

As regards the two main institutions of Vedic times, Polyandry and the Swayamvara, little need be said. Modern taste revolts from a consideration of the conditions of Polyandry, which only satisfies an instinct at the expense of all delicacy of feeling and sentiment. The Swayamvara is a far more pleasing ceremony, associated as it is with a pure idea of woman's love centering in a single individual to the exclusion of all others, and finding a full response in the chivalrous affection of a Hindu hero. Indeed, in the story of Nala and Damayanti the ceremony is accompanied by an exquisite conception of maidenly modesty, followed by the self-abnegating devotion of a wife and a mother; and the charming details will scarcely fail to excite the sympathies of all who care to apprehend the depths of woman's tenderness towards a husband whom she has really and truly loved. But still the institution is an exaggerated expression of the age of chivalry, and seems to have originated in the very Polyandry which later Hinduism affects to ignore. That a lover should seek to win the affections of the damsel whom he loves, by a series of fond attentions and devoted service, is in strict accordance with the instincts of human nature; but it is contrary to the conception of maidenly modesty, which prevails in all civilized communities, that a damsel should publicly manifest her passion for a man who has not previously given her undoubted proofs of his affection. This maidenly modesty is certainly to be found in the story of Nala and Damayanti; but it bears the impress of having been introduced by the Hindu bard, and the mythical details respecting the talking birds with golden wings seem to give weight to the suspicion.

If, however, we turn to the Brahmanic age, as it finds expression in the code of Manu, we find that Polyandry and the Swayamvara are alike ignored, and so too is the sentiment that the woman is in any way the equal to the man. The old Vedic idea that religious worship should be performed by a married pair is indeed preserved in Manu, but without any observation which would imply equality. "Women," he says, "were created to be mothers, and men to be fathers; it is therefore ordained in the Veda that religious rites should be performed by the husband together with the wife."[2] But in every other direction

[2] Manu, ix.

the entire dependence and subordination of women is indicated in the most decided language, as will be seen from the following texts:

"A girl, a young woman, or a martron must do nothing according to her own pleasure, even in her own dwelling-place. In childhood she is dependent on her father; in youth on her husband; in widowhood on her sons. If she has no sons, she must be dependent upon the kinsmen of her deceased husband; if he left no kinsmen, she must be dependent upon the kinsmen of her father; if she have no such kinsmen, she must be dependent upon the Raja. A woman must never seek to be independent. She must never wish to separate herself from her father, her husband, or her sons; for by such a separation she exposes both her father's family and her husband's family to contempt. The father is reprehensible who does not give his daughter in marriage at the proper time; the husband is reprehensible who does not pay due attention to his wife; and the son is reprehensible who does not protect his mother after the death of her lord.[3]

[3] Manu, v. 147—149; ix. 3, 4. Notwithstanding, however, these restrictions upon Hindu women, the wife is occasionally the master in the household, and exercises an influence which would be startling even in Europe. An amusing illustration of the fact is to be found in the biography of Ramdoolal Dey by Baboo Grish Chunder Ghose. Ramdoolal had purchased and stocked his warehouses with six hundred bags of the finest sugar. After a while the sugar market became favourable and he sold the whole. Meantime his wife had engaged a number of Bráhmans to read the Mahábhárata; and for ninety days thousands of Indian women flocked to the house to hear the sacred stories, and were entertained with sherbet made from the sugar. When, therefore, Ramdoolal ordered delivery of the six hundred bags he found that he had only forty left. In the excitement of the moment he called his wife an angel of ill-luck; upon which she ran to her bed-chamber, and bolted the door behind her. The finale of the story may be best told in the language of the biographer: "Let those who call the Bengalee ungallant and the oppresser of the female sex, contemplate the scene I am about to describe. Slowly Ramdoolal bent his steps in the direction his wife had taken. Finding the doors of her chamber closed, he knocked gently; sobs alone answered him from within. He confessed the enormity of his crime; he called himself a coward and a fool. By a thousand endearing epithets he craved his lady's pardon; mercy was accorded by heaven, and would a woman deny it? There he stood in that outer room; the great man humbled to the dust, moaning and sobbing himself as the moans and sobs of his wife came piercingly upon his ears. At last the bruised heart of his spouse softened; she cried her-

The duty of a father as regards the marriage of his daughters is laid down very explicitly by Manu; and indeed is felt by every Hindu in the present day to be a religious as well as a family and social obligation.

"Every man," says Manu, "should give his daughter in marriage to an excellent and handsome youth of the same caste, even though she has not attained her age; but it is better that a damsel, though marriageable, should stay at home until her death, rather than that her father should give her in marriage to a worthless bridegroom. A damsel should wait three years after she is marriageable; and then if her father has not given her in marriage, she may choose for herself a bridegroom of equal caste, and neither she nor her chosen husband commits any offence. A damsel who thus chooses her husband should not carry with her the jewels which she received from her father, nor those which have been given to her by her mother or brethren; and if she carries them away she commits theft. A man who thus marries a damsel after she is of full age, should not give a nuptial present; since her father lost his dominion over her by detaining her at a time when she might have been a mother."[4]

The duties of husbands towards their wives are also defined with significant fulness of detail in the Brahmanical code; and an attempt is obviously made to reconcile the wife to the subordinate position in which she is placed by the Hindu lawgiver.

"A married woman," says Manu, "must be honoured and

self to pity. Rising from the bed on which she had flung herself, she slowly drew back the bolts and her husband entered. Throwing himself at her feet, he again and again craved for forgiveness. Forgiveness was at last purchased by him for the worth in gold of one lakh of rupees. This little fortune (about £10,000) Ramdoolal's wife, at her death, left to her brother." The writer of this biography is an enlightened and educated Hindu, and the editor of *The Bengalee*, in the English language; but his idea of gallantry is open to correction. A European would scarcely consider it gallantry on the part of a husband to purchase the forgiveness of a wife with £10,000.

[4] Manu, ix. 88—96. This permission, which is granted to maidens of a certain age, to choose their own husband, must not be confounded with the Swayamvará, although it may be a Brahmanical reproduction of the Vedic custom. The Swayamvará involved the idea of a father providing for a daughter on her arriving at a marriageable age, by inviting a number of young men to an entertainment at which she was to choose a bridegroom.

adorned by her father, her brethren, and her husband, if they would obtain abundant prosperity. Where females are honoured, there the deities are pleased; but where the females are not honoured, there all religious acts are of no avail. Should the women of a family, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse against any house, that house and all belonging to it will utterly perish, as if destroyed by a sacrifice for the death of an enemy. Therefore let all men who are desirous of wealth continually supply the women of their family with ornaments, apparel, and food at all times of festival. If a wife be not elegantly attired she will not exhilarate her husband, and unless her husband be pleased there will be no offspring. When a wife is gaily adorned her whole house is embellished, but if she be without ornament the whole house will be deprived of decoration.[5] When good women thus irradiate the houses of their lords, they are like unto Lakshmi, the goddess of abundance. From the wife alone proceed offspring, good household management, solicitous attention, most exquisite caresses, and heavenly beatitude. She who deserts not her lord, but keeps her heart, speech, and body in subjection to him, shall obtain his mansion in heaven, and be called Sadhwi, or good and faithful; but she who is disloyal to her husband, will be born in the next life from the womb of a jackal, or be tormented with the horrible diseases which punish vice."[6]

The duties of a wife towards her husband and household generally are equally significant.

"She must always," says Manu, "be in a cheerful temper, devoting herself to the good management of the household, taking great care of the household furniture, and keeping down all her expenses with a frugal hand. The husband to whom her father has given her, or to whom her brother has given her with the consent of her father, she must obsequiously honour while he lives, and never neglect him when he dies. The husband gives bliss continually to his wife here below, and he will give her happiness in the next world. He must be constantly revered as a god by a virtuous wife; even though he does not observe approved usages, or is enamoured of another woman, or is devoid of good qualities. No sacrifice is allowed to women apart from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting; so far only as a wife

[5] Manu, iii. 55—62. [6] Ib. ix. 26—30.

honours her lord, so far is she exalted in heaven. A faithful wife who wishes to attain heaven, and dwell there with her husband, must never do anything unkind towards him, whether he be living or dead."

The duties of widows are equally explicit, and involve no idea of the horrible Sati. Manu says:

"When the husband is dead let his widow emaciate her body by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruit; but let her not even pronounce the name of another man. Let her continue until death, forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue, which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one husband alone. Many thousands of Bráhmans have avoided sensuality from their early youth, and have, consequently, had no children, but, nevertheless, when they have died they have ascended to heaven; and in like manner a virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if after the death of her husband she devotes herself to pious austerities. But a widow, who, from her desire to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace upon herself here below, and will be excluded hereafter from the seat of her lord. In no part of this code is a second husband allowed to a virtuous women."[7]

The duties of a widower are placed upon another footing by the Hindu lawgiver. Manu says:

"If the wife of a twice-born man die before him, and if she be of his own caste, and if she has lived a virtuous life according to the ordinance, her body must be burned by her husband with sacred fire and fit implements of sacrifice; and when he has thus performed the funeral rites to his wife he may again marry and light the nuptial fire."[8]

The system of confinement and repression, however, was not always successful in subduing the irregular desires of such women as were unmindful of their duties and obligations.

"Husbands," says Manu, "should diligently keep their wives under lawful restrictions. No man, indeed, can wholly restrain women by lawful measures; but a wife may be employed in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purification and female

[7] Manu, v. 157—162. [8] Ib. v. 167—169.

duty, in the prepartion of daily food, and in the superintendence of household utensils. Women are not secure by confinement at home, even under affectionate and observant guardians; and those only are truly secure, who are guarded by their own good inclinations. Six faults bring infamy upon a woman : Drinking intoxicating liquors, associating with evil persons, absence from a husband, rambling abroad, sleeping at unseasonable times, and dwelling in the house of another. Such women care not whether a lover be handsome or ugly, young or old; they think it is enough that he is a man; and through their passion for men, their mutable temper, their want of settled affection, and their perverse nature, they soon become alienated from their husbands."[9]

As regards the maintenance and conduct of a wife during the absence of her husband on business or pleasure, the following rules are laid down in the code of Manu:

"Should a man have business abroad, he should assure a fitting maintenance for his wife while he is away; for even if a wife be virtuous she may be tempted to act amiss, if she be distressed by want of subsistence. If the maintenance of a wife be thus provided for her, she should continue firm in the practice of religious austerities whilst her husband is absent; but if her maintenance be not provided for, she should subsist by spinning and other blameless arts. If the husband live abroad on account of some sacred duty, she should wait for him eight years; if he is abroad on account of knowledge or fame, she should wait six years; if he is abroad on account of pleasure, she should wait three years."[10]

The significance of these texts lies in the law which directs the wife to await the return of her husband for certain periods of years, which are to be longer or shorter, according to the circumstances which have led to the absence of her lord. This law would seem to imply that after a specified period of separation a woman might marry again; but such a conclusion is opposed to the spirit of another law, which denounces the second marriage of a woman. The commentator Kulluka, however, endeavours to remove the difficulty by adding that at the end of the period of separation the woman should rejoin her

[9] Manu, ix. 6—15. [10] Ib. ix. 74—76.

husband.[11] But this addition bears obvious marks of being an arbitrary interpretation; and it seems more likely that there existed an old law respecting the number of years during which a wife was to await the return of her husband; and that Kulluka has simply brought this law into apparent conformity with the rule which denounces all second marriages of females.

The laws of Manu as regards divorce, and the circumstances under which a man might marry a second wife whilst the first is still alive, are full and explicit; and they tend to prove that whilst polygamy was an institution in Vedic times, monogamy was the dominant idea in the Brahmanic period. Manu says:

"Should a wife treat her husband with aversion, he should bear with her for one whole year; but after that period he may deprive her of her separate property, and cease to treat her as his wife. She who neglects her husband, though he be addicted to gaming, or fond of spirituous liquors, or diseased, must be deserted for three months, and deprived of her ornaments and household furniture. But if she is averse to her husband because he is mad, or a deadly sinner, or without manly strength, or afflicted with such maladies as are the punishment of crimes, she must neither be deserted, nor stripped of her property.[12] A wife may at all times be superseded by another wife if she drinks spirituous liquors, or acts immorally, or manifests hatred towards her husband, or is diseased, or mischievous, or wastes her husband's property. A wife who is barren may be superseded by another in the eighth year; she whose children are all dead may be superseded in the tenth year; she who brings forth only daughters may be superseded in the eleventh year; but she who speaks unkindly may be superseded without delay. A wife, however, who is afflicted with disease, but at the same time is beloved and virtuous, must never be disgraced, although she may be superseded by another wife with her own consent. If a wife, who has been legally superseded, departs in wrath from the house, she must either be instantly confined, or she must be abandoned in the presence of the whole family."[13]

It will be seen from the foregoing precepts that a Hindu was justified in putting away a wife, not only if she proved un-

[11] Manu, ix. 76.
[12] Ib. ix. 77—79.
[13] Ib. ix. 80—83.

faithful, but also if she indulged in spirituous liquors, or was diseased, or barren, or only gave birth to daughters. In the three latter cases a good wife was not to be superseded by a second wife without her own consent; and even then she was not to be divorced or put away. As regards a wife who was barren, or who only gave birth to daughters, it will be observed that a patriarchal custom, originating in an age of polygamy, was converted into a religious obligation; and such is the force of religious obligation in the minds of many women that it will override one of the strongest instincts of human nature. Thus it was that when Sarai found that she bore no children, she took Hagar her Egyptian handmaid, and gave her to Abram to be his wife;[14] and even in the present day Hindu wives are to be found, who are prepared to see a husband take a second wife, rather than that he should die without becoming the father of a son.[15]

[14] Genesis xvi.

[15] The following incident in the life of Ramdoolal Dey, as described by Grish Chunder Ghose, furnishes a graphic picture of a scene which not infrequently occurs in a Hindu household, when the first wife has grown old without giving birth to a son : "A strict Hindu, filled with the orthodox horror for *put*,—the hell of the Hindus, which is declared by the sastras to yawn for the childless,—Ramdoolal was advised by the Bráhmans who constantly surrounded him, to marry another wife. With hesitancy and by stealth was the marriage consummated—unknown to his first wife, unsuspected even by her. But the news of such an important event in the life of a husband cannot long be kept a secret from a spouse. It soon travelled into the ears of the rival, who repaired in gloomy dissatisfaction to her brother's house in Moolajore. Ramdoolal dared not bring this second wife to his home, without softening and conciliating the first. The latter was at last found to be not unreasonable ; though the woman within her, the natural feeling of her sex, had made her at first a rebel against her lord. She returned in the best of all possible humours ; returned to welcome the bride to her home, to carry in her arms the rival in the affections of her husband ; the child, who, arrived at womanhood, gave that husband two boys and five girls as the heirs of his vast estate. Yet the lives of the two wives did not run smoothly. The jealousy natural to the sex embittered existences, which had otherwise no ground for distraction. Outwardly the two ladies exhibited no signs of discord. The youngest never dared ever to raise her veil before the eldest; or to address her, except in a low, not direct, respectful tone of voice. But there was gall and bitterness in their hearts. Ramdoolal invariably took his meals in the apartments of his first wife, and skulked into those of his second after the former had fallen sound asleep. He dared not speak to the latter

The laws against adultery, which appear to have been in force in the Brahmanic age, are naturally very severe.

"Adultery," says Manu, "causes a mixture of castes, from whence arises violation of duties, and the destruction of the root of felicity. Men, therefore, who manifest adulterous inclinations for the wives of others, should be punished by the Raja with such bodily marks as excite aversion, and be banished from the realm. A man who converses in secret with the wife of another, and has been previously noted for such an offence, shall pay a fine of two hundred and fifty panas.[16] But if a man so converses for some reasonable cause, and has not been previously noted for such an offence, he shall pay no fine, for he has incurred no transgression. He who talks with the wife of another man at a place of pilgrimage, or in a forest, or grove, or at the confluence of rivers, incurs the guilt of an adulterous inclination. To send her flowers or perfumes, to sport and jest with her, to touch her apparel and ornaments, to sit with her on the same couch, are held to be adulterous acts on his part. The wives of all the four castes ought to be ever most especially guarded; but the Sudra who commits actual adultery with the wife of a Bráh-

in the presence of the former; and all his children by his second wife were born in a separate house, which belonged to that wife's relatives; for he would not wound the feelings of his first spouse by parading before her eyes the evidences of his secret love towards the second. It was not until the children grew up, and were able to walk and to hop, that they were brought to his own mansion. And then, such was the caprice of a truly benevolent heart, their own mother was not more watchful and affectionate towards them than their step-mother. Yet this step-mother constantly laboured to estrange her husband from her rival by spells and by poojahs ; and her weakness on this point was so extravagant that even the lads about her, whenever they wanted money, had only to present her with a cocoa-nut, or other fruit curiously marked, declaring that it was a charm,—to extract from her foolish credulity whatever sums they required. Her rival having died before her, she anxiously inquired of the Brahmans, if there was any means available for preventing the former from joining her husband in heaven prior to her own death." *Lecture on the Life of Ramdoolal Dey, the Bengalee millionnaire, delivered in the Hall of the Hooghly College on the* 14*th March,* 1868, *by Grish Chunder Ghose.*

[16] A pana was apparently equivalent to the modern pice, or something less than a half-penny. But a pice in the time of Manu may have borne a much higher value than it does in the present day. The penny of Anglo-Saxon times was an important coin.

man should be put to death. Any man who converses with the wife of another, after he has been forbidden by her husband or father, shall pay a fine; but mendicants, eulogists, Bráhmans prepared for a sacrifice, and artisans are not prohibited from speaking to married women." [17]

"Should a wife actually violate the duty which she owes to her husband, let the Raja condemn her to be devoured by dogs in a public place; and let the adulterer be burned to death upon an iron bed. A Sudra who has committed adultery with a woman of a twice-born caste, who has been guarded by her husband at home, shall suffer death; but if the woman has not been guarded, he shall be mutilated and deprived of all his substance. A Vaisya who commits adultery with a guarded Brahman woman shall be imprisoned for a year and forfeit all his wealth; and if a Kshatriya commit the same crime, he shall be fined a thousand panas, and be shaved with impure water; but if the Brahman woman has not been guarded by her husband, the Vaisya shall be fined five hundred panas, and the Kshatriya one thousand panas." [18]

"A Bráhman who has criminal intercourse with a guarded woman with her free consent shall be fined five hundred panas; but if against her will, he shall be fined a thousand panas. When a Bráhman commits adultery, for which one of the other castes would be put to death, he must be shaved ignominiously; for a Raja must never slay a Bráhman, even though he be guilty of all possible crimes. Indeed no greater crime is known on earth than that of slaying a Bráhman: the Raja may banish him, but even then he must retain his property and be sent unhurt out of the realm." [19]

"These laws," continues Manu, "do not relate to the wives of public singers and dancers, or of such base men as live by the intrigues of their wives; men who either carry women to others, or who live concealed at home and permit their wives to carry on a criminal intercourse. Yet that man who carries on a private intercourse with such women, or with servant girls kept by one master, or with female anchorites, shall be compelled to pay a small fine. If a man has intercourse with a damsel without her consent, he shall immediately suffer corporal punishment; but

[17] Manu, viii. 352—360. [18] Ib. viii. 374—376. [19] Ib. viii. 378—381.

if the damsel was willing, and belonged to his own caste, he shall not suffer such punishment."[20]

It will be unnecessary to comment upon the foregoing laws which refer to the relations of the sexes, as they will fully speak for themselves. It may, however, be observed that great stress is laid upon the question of whether the wife was guarded or otherwise; thus implying an obligation on the part of the husband to place his wife under certain restrictions. Again, it will be seen that whilst the existence of public women was recognized by the code, yet men who visited them were punishable by a small fine. It is doubtful, however, whether this fine was regarded as a punishment, or simply as a tax; for if the former, it would seem to imply a higher standard of morality than that which actually prevailed. At the very commencement of the Buddhist period, and for centuries later, public women were living in great splendour and luxury; whilst the presence of a mistress in the same house with a legitimate wife, was not opposed to the moral sense of the general community. At the same time this laxity of morals was brought so far under the cognizance of the common law, that a dancing girl could be punished by the civil authorities, if, without reasonable excuse, she broke any engagement she might have made.[21]

There is, however, one strange and significant feature in the laws of Manu as regards public women, which demands special notice. It will be seen that female anchorites are placed in the same category with singing and dancing girls. This law is so widely different from the old stern Roman rule as regards the chastity of Vestals, that it can only be regarded as a sarcasm levelled at those Buddhist nuns who devoted themselves to a convent life. The existence of female devotees seems to have been unknown to the old Brahmanical system, although such women are to be found in the present day at Banaras and other sacred places. Hence it is easy to apprehend the full bitterness of the law of Manu, which classifies female anchorites with public women, and enacts that those who violated their chastify should be punished by a small fine.

[20] See Bigandet's *Life of Buddha*, Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, and Halhed's *Gentoo Laws*.

[21] Manu, viii. 362—366.

The law as regards the conduct to be observed by a Hindu towards the wives of his several brothers is sufficiently indicated in the code by the simple statement, that the wife of an elder brother was to be considered as a mother-in-law, and the wife of a younger brother as a daughter-in-law.[22] There was however, one important exception to this rule, which originated in an old Vedic custom, and is partially recognized by Manu. In ancient times, when women were regarded as property, the widow or widows of a deceased husband were inherited by his brother or nearest male. This custom seems to have been continnued to a comparatively recent period by the force of a religious obligation connected with the Sraddha, or feast of the dead. It was deemed essential that the offerings made to the soul after death, should be presented by a son of the deceased; and consequently it was necessary that every man should by some process or other become the father of a son. Accordingly the dogma seems to have been generally accepted, that if a man died childless, his nearest kinsman should beget a son upon the surviving widow, who should be regarded as the son of the deceased, and should present the necessary offering to his shade. Manu was aware of this custom, which indeed has already been exemplified in the legend of Vyasa, who raised up sons to his deceased brother Vichitra-virya; but he can scarcely be said to tolerate it. He directs that under any circumstances the kinsman should be free from all impure desire, and that after the birth of a son no further intercourse should be permitted under pain of loss of caste. But he adds that no woman of a twice-born caste is authorized to become a mother by any one but her husband; and that the practice is fit only for cattle, and is reprehended by the learned Bráhmans. He refers the custom itself to the reign of Vena, one of those mythical Rajas who may be referred to a very remote antiquity, and who are said to have governed the whole earth. It is also stated in Manu that Vena indulged in his fondness for women to such an extent as to weaken his intellect and cause a confusion of castes. Now according to such vague traditions of Raja Vena as have been preserved in the Mahábhárata and Puránas, he appears at some primitive period to have displayed great hostility to the Bráhmans. It is not, therefore, surprising that the compilers of the

[22] Manu, ix. 57, 58.

Brahmanical code should have referred an evil custom to so obnoxious a Raja, and should otherwise have sought to blacken his name.[23]

This degrading custom still largely prevails amongst the lower orders of Hindus, but is no longer practised by men of the twice-born castes; and with its decline another custom has arisen, namely, that of adoption. According to Manu, a man without a son might appoint his married daughter to raise up a son to perform the necessary ceremonies at the Sráddha; but in this case the son of the daughter would ultimately be required to offer two funeral cakes, namely, one to his natural father, and one to his maternal grandfather who had adopted him. A childless man might also adopt a son from another family; but in that case he could offer no funeral cake to his natural father, but only to his adopted father; and he could consequently never claim the estate of his natural father, as that would devolve on the son who offered the cake.[24]

[23] Manu, ix. 59—69. Compare Vishnu Purána, Book i. chap. 13.
[24] Ib. ix. 132, 142, 145—147, 162—164, 167.

CHAPTER XIII

HINDU GOVERNMENT

The theory of Hindu government which is set forth in the code of Manu, presents a marked contrast to the patriarchal and feudal types which appear in the Vedic traditions of the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana. The loyal attachment of kinsmen and retainers, and their obligations to render military service to their suzerain, which characterize the great story of the war of Bhárata, find no expression whatever in the code of Brahmanical law; and no precepts are to be discovered, which recognize in any way that patriotic interest in the welfare of the Raj, which was respectively displayed by the general community during the gambling match of Nala, and during the movement in favour of installing Ráma as Yuvaraja. To all appearance the old Roman sentiment of devotion to the common weal, which is to be found amongst all Aryan nations, and which certainly appertained to the old Vedic Aryans, had passed away beneath the blighting influence of Brahmanical oppression; and the public spirit which had animated the body politic in the Vedic age, and which is essential to the permanence of states and empires, seems to have been narrowed down to the caste, the village, or the family. The result has been that for ages the people of India have had but one political tie, one nationality, and one patriotism, and that is religion, and religion alone. Foreign rule may be introduced, a Raj may be annexed by a paramount power, and a once reigning family be condemned to obscurity or exile; but the masses have never exhibited a spark of that deep-seated loyalty, which led the old Barons of England to rally round the standard of King Charles, and which stirred up the Highland clans to fight lustily for the Chevalier, and to spurn the tempting rewards that were offered for his capture. If, however, the religion be assailed, or only threatened by the temporal power, common superstitions and common fears seem to unite the people into a mysterious brotherhood, which will fight to the last with the high-souled daring of Crusaders, although it may be wanting in the stern discipline of Cromwell's Ironsides.

The political system of the Bráhmans, like their religious system, was based upon fear. Under the gloomy influence of a remorseless priesthood, the Raja and his people ceased to glory in the worship of the old Vedic deities, and were kept in a state of abject submission by the dread of mysterious evil, either in this life, or in the life hereafter. In the isolation of a village, or a household, an independence might have been occasionally displayed; but all constitutional checks upon the conduct of a Raja seem to have disappeared; excepting such as were exercised by the Bráhmans alone. The Raja was regarded as a divine administrator of the law; but the law was to be interpreted by the Bráhmans. He was a despotic sovereign; but he was restrained in every direction by religious obligations. He held the country by a military occupation; but he was controlled by Brahmanical advisers. If, like Saul, he sought to throw off the yoke of the priesthood, another Raja would be set up in his room; and he might expect poison in every dish, and a dagger in the dress of every female in his household.

The system of Government which finds expression in the Institutes of Manu may uow be considered under four several heads, namely : 1st, The Raja, his Court and Ministers. 2nd, Government of the Provinces. 3rd, Administration of Justice. 4th, Laws of War.

The precepts which refer to the Raja, his Court and Ministers, comprise in the first instance a sketch of the Hindu ideal of a Raja as a divine being, followed by the obligations which bind him to reward the good and to punish all evil-doers. His daily duties are there laid down; the worship of the gods, the vices he is to avoid, his public appearance, his secret Councils, his noon-day meal, the precautions he is to take against poison and assassination, his women, military reviews, reception of spies, evening meal, and music. The whole winds up with full directions as regards his Metropolis, Fort, and Palace; his Ráni and Priests; his Minister and officials; his Ambassador or Minister for Foreign Affairs; and the distribution of the chief offices. The details connected with these several subjects may now be considered in regular order.

The Hindu ideal of a Raja is in exact accordance with the Oriental idea of sovereignty, which still prevails amongst the people of India.

"Brahmá," says Manu, "created a Raja for the maintenance of the law; for without a Raja the world would quake with fear. And Brahmá formed the Raja out of the essence of the eight deities who guard the universe; and thus the Raja surpasses all mortals in glory, and should exercise the attributes of the eight gods. As Indra, the god of the firmament, sends plentiful showers during the four months of the rainy season; so let the Raja rain abundance upon his people. As Surya, the sun-god, draws up the water by his rays; so let the Raja by his sovereign power draw the legal revenue from his dominions. As Pavana, the god of air, moves throughout the world; so let the Raja pervade all places by his spies. As Yama, the judge of the dead, punishes friends and foes; so let the Raja punish all offending subjects. As Varuna, the god of the waters, binds the guilty in fatal cords; so let the Raja keep evil-doers in rigid bonds. As Chandra, the moon-god, delights the world in the fulness of his glory; so let the Raja appear before his subjects in the splendour of his sovereignty. As Agni, the god of fire, burns and consumes; so let the just wrath of the Raja destroy all evil ministers. As Prithivi, the earth-goddess, supports all creatures, so let the Raja protect all his subjects. The Raja is a powerful deity in human form; and even as a child he must not be treated lightly. He is the firmament, the sun, the wind, the judge of all men, the deep ocean, the full moon, the fire, and the earth. He is the perfect essence of majesty, by whose power the goddess of abundance rises on her lotus, in whose valour dwells conquest, and in whose wrath dwells destruction."[1]

The duty of a Raja as regards rewarding virtuous men, and punishing evil-doers, is thus laid down in the code :

"The Raja should reward the good and punish the wicked. Punishment is the perfection of justice, the true manager of public affairs, the dispenser of all laws, the governor of all, and the protector of all. When it is inflicted with consideration and justice, it makes all the people happy; when it is inflicted hastily and unjustly, it wholly destroys them. If the Raja were not to punish the evil-doers, the stronger would roast the weaker like fish on a spit; the crow would peck at the consecrated food; the dog would eat up the sacred ghee; the rich would be deprived

[1] Manu, vii. 1—13, ix. 303—311. The goddess of abundance is Lakshmi.

of all their wealth; the twice-born would be overcome by the Sudra. If punishment were withdrawn, or inflicted unjustly, all castes would become corrupt, all barriers would be destroyed, and there would be an utter confusion among all people. But when punishment advances with a black countenance and red eyes to destroy sin, the people dwell undisturbed. That Raja is the fit dispenser of justice who speaks the truth on all occasions, who understands the sacred books; and such a Raja, if he inflicts just punishment, and knows the distinctions of virtue, pleasure, and wealth, will increase the happiness which men derive from all three. But punishment itself will destroy that Raja, who is crafty, voluptuous, and wrathful. Punishment shall overtake his castles, his territories, and all that exist therein, and all his race; whilst the gods and Rishis will be filled with affliction and return from earth to the sky. Let the Raja act with justice in his own dominions, chastise his foes with vigour, be honest and truthful to his friends, and lenient to the Bráhmans : and his fame will spread over the whole world like a drop of oil on the surface of water. But if he is unjust, untruthful, and unkind to the Bráhmans, his reputation will be like a lump of ghee in a river."[2]

The daily duties of a Raja are thus indicated :

"Every morning the Raja should rise at early dawn, and make his oblations to the gods, and respectfully attend to Bráhmans who are versed in the Veda, and in the science of morals. From the Bráhmans he should learn to be modest and composed; for without humility many Rajas have perished with all their possessions. In this manner Raja Vena was utterly ruined, and so was the great Raja Nahusha. Day and night must the Raja endeavour to control his organs, and to shun the eighteen vices; the ten vices of pleasure and the eight vices of wrath, all of which end in misery. The ten vices which are born of pleasure are hunting, gambling, sleeping by day, censuring rivals, excess with women, intoxication, singing, music, dancing, and useless travel. The eight vices which are born of wrath are tale-bearing, violence, insidious wounding, envy, detraction, unjust confiscation, reviling, and open assault. Vice is more dreadful than death; since after death the vicious man sinks to the lower regions, whilst the virtuous man ascends to heaven."[3]

[2] Manu, vii. 13—34.

[3] Manu, vii. 35—53.

"Having paid due respect to the Bráhmans, the Raja should enter the hall of his palace, and gratify his subjects with kind looks and words. He should then dismiss them all and take secret counsel with his Ministers, either by ascending a mountain, or going privately to a terrace, a bower, a forest, or some other lonely place where he can consult with his Ministers unobserved and without listeners; for that Raja whose secrets are hidden shall attain dominion over the whole earth, although he may possess no treasure. He must exclude from his Councils all who are stupid, or diseased, as well as all heretics, women, and talking birds : since those who are disgraced are apt to betray secret counsel, and so are talking birds, and above all so are women."[4]

"At noon, after the Raja has consulted with his Ministers, and taken exercise, and bathed, he should enter his private apartment for the purpose of taking food. His victuals should be prepared by servants who are attached to him and are incapable of perfidy; and when the food has been tested and proved innocent, and when it has also been consecrated by mantras which repel poison, he may eat thereof; but he should always swallow such medical substances with his food as resist poison, and constantly wear such gems as are known to repel poison. The dress and ornaments of his females should be examined, lest some weapon should be concealed in them; after which the females should render him humble service with fans, water, and perfumes. In like manner he should take diligent care when he goes out in a carriage or on horseback; when he sits or when he lies down; when he takes his food, and when he bathes and anoints himself, and puts on all his habiliments. When he has finished his noon-day meal, he may divert himself with his women in the recesses of his palace; and when he has idled a reasonable time, he should again think of the public affairs, and review his armed men with their elephants, horses, chariots, accoutrements, and weapons. At sunset he should perform his religious duty. After this he should proceed to his inner apartments, and there in private and well armed, he should take the reports of his spies, of whom he should take five kinds in his pay, namely : active and artful young men, degraded anchorites, distressed husbandmen, decayed merchants, and false

[4] Ib. vii. 145—150.

devotees. When he has heard all that they have to say, he should dismiss them. After this he should go to another secret chamber, and eat his evening meal attended by his women; and then having been recreated by music, he should retire early to rest that he may rise on the morrow refreshed from his slumbers."[5]

Commentary upon the foregoing details is perhaps scarcely necessary. The picture which they present of the life of a Hindu Raja is identical with that which may still be found in most Indian courts. Superstition, secrecy, suspicion, idling with women, espionage, and military display were and are the conditions of Oriental sovereignty. Meantime intrigues like those which agitated the zenana of Maharaja Dasaratha were doubtless as frequent in the past age, as they are in the courts of Indian princes of our own time.

The directions laid down in the Institutes of Manu respecting the Metropolis, Fort, and Palace of the Raja, and also his Rani, Priests, and Ministers, may be thus indicated :

"A Raja should dwell in a district where the country is level and open, and abounds in grain. The Raja should there dwell in a capital city, having round it a desert by way of a fortress, or else a fortress of earth, or one of water, or one of trees, or one of armed men, or one of mountains. Of all these a fortress of mountains is to be preferred; for wild beasts dwell in the desert fortress, vermin in the earth fortress, aquatic animals in the water fortress, monkeys in the fortress of trees, men in the fortress of armed men, but gods in the fortress of mountains. The Raja should dwell within a Fort; for one bowman placed upon a wall is a match in war for a hundred enemies, and a hundred bowmen on a wall is in like manner a match for ten thousand enemies. The Fort should be supplied with weapons, money, grain, beasts, Bráhmans, artificers, engines, grass, and water. In the centre of the Fort the Raja should raise his Palace, which should be completely defended, brilliant with white stucco, and surrounded with water and trees."[6]

"When a Raja has prepared a Fort and Palace he should choose a Ráni of the same caste as himself, born of an exalted race, captivating the heart, adorned with every beauty and every

[5] Manu, vi. 154, 216, 225.   [6] Ib. vii. 69—76.

virtue. He must also appoint a domestic priest or Purohita; also a performer of sacrifices, or Ritwij; and these Bráhmans may solemnize the religious rites of his family, as well as those which are performed with the three sacred fires."[7]

"A Raja should perform sacrifices accompanied with gifts. He should pay due respect to Bráhmans who have returned from the dwellings of their preceptors; for a present to such a Bráhman is called a precious gem, which is deposited by Rajas with the Bráhman caste, which never perishes, and which neither thieves nor foes can take away. An oblation in the mouth of a Bráhman is far better than offerings to holy fire; it never drops, it never dies, it is never consumed."[8]

"The Raja must appoint seven or eight Ministers, who must be sworn. They should be men whose ancestors were the servants of Rajas; who are versed in the Sástras; who are personally brave; who are skilled in the use of weapons, and who are of noble lineage. He should perpetually consult with those Ministers on matters pertaining to peace and war; on his army; on his revenues; on the protection of his people; and on the proper expenditure of the wealth which he has acquired. He should ascertain the opinions of the Counsellors, first of each one separately, and then of the whole collectively; and then he should do that which is most beneficial in public affairs. To one learned Bráhman distinguished among them all, the Raja should impart his momentous counsel; and to this Bráhman he should entrust all transactions with full confidence; and when he has finally resolved how to act, he should commence his measures in conjunction with this Chief Minister."[9]

"A Raja must in like manner appoint other Officers, who should be men of integrity, well informed, steady, habituated to gain wealth, and tried by experience. Those who are brave, skilful, well-born, and honest he should employ in his mines of gold and gems, and in other similar works; but those who are pusillanimous he should employ in the recesses of his palace."[10]

"The Raja should likewise employ an Ambassador who is versed in all the Sástras; who understands hints, external signs,

[7] Manu, vii. 77, 78.
[8] Ib. vii. 79—84.
[9] Ib. vii. 51—59.
[10] Ib. vii. 60—62.

and actions; whose abilities are great, and who is of illustrious birth. He should be one who is generally beloved; who is dexterous in business; who is endowed with an excellent memory; who knows countries and times; and who is handsome, brave, and eloquent. In the transaction of affairs, the Ambassador should be able to comprehend the plans of a foreign Raja, by the signs, hints, and acts of his confidential servants; and he should also be able to discover the measures which a foreign Raja desires to undertake, by studying the character and conduct of his Ministers. Thus when a Raja has learned from his Ambassador all the designs of a foreign Raja, he may be able by vigilant care to guard himself against any evil." [11]

"The government of the country and regulation of the treasury should be in the hands of the Raja; the administration of justice should be in the hands of the Rajá's officers; the forces of the realm should be directed by the Commander-in-Chief; and the negotiations respecting peace and war should be conducted by Ambassadors." [12]

The foregoing directions respecting the guarded security in which a Raja should dwell, and the Ministers and Officers by whom he should be surrounded, exhibit with sufficient clearness the timidity, distrust, and love of deception and artifice, which but too often characterize Indian administration. The ideal of a city, a palace, and a fort, will be found strikingly illustrated in the description of the city of Ayodhyá, and the fort and palace of Maháraja Dasaratha; as well as in the description of Lanká, and the fort and palace of Rávana, which appear in the Rámáyana. The character of an Ambassador, again, is similar to that of Sanjaya, the Minister and charioteer of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra, who was sent on an embassy to the Pándavas prior to the war of the Mahábhárata.[13]

The administration of the Provinces, which is prescribed by the compilers of the code, seems to have partaken largely of a

[11] Manu, vii. 63, 64, 66, 68.

[12] Ib. vii. 65. Elphinstone justly observes that the officer who is here styled an Ambassador bears a closer resemblance to a Minister for foreign affairs.

[13] A distinction, however, must be laid down between the marks of resemblance which are to be found in the original Vedic tradition and those which appear in the modern Brahmanical version.

military character; and is such as might have been expected after the conquest and occupation of Hindustan by the Aryan invaders. A military force was cantoned in the several districts according to their extent; whilst a civil administration was introduced upon the basis of the ancient division of the country into villages or townships.[14] The village system appears to have originated in remote antiquity, and still continues to prevail throughout India, excepting, perhaps, in Bengal proper. A Hindu village, however, comprehends something more than an English village; and it will be necessary to glance at its constitution, before taking into consideration the administrative measures laid down in Manu.

The so-called Hindu village is in fact a township, or district including an area of land, as well as a village or town, properly so called. It varies in extent, but is inhabited by a single community; and is separated from all other villages by boundaries, which are carefully defined and rigidly guarded. The village lands may be of all descriptions; cultivated, culturable and uncultivated, pasture, and unculturable waste. The lands are divided into fields by boundaries, which are as well understood as those of the village; and the name of each field, with its qualities, extent, and holders, are minutely entered in the village records. Each village thus consists of lands, or farms, from which the community draws its subsistence; and the assemblage of houses or huts, which constitute the village proper, and in which the community dwell more or less together for the sake of security.[15]

These village communities are little republics, each having its head-man, and its little body of village officials. But the officials themselves are controlled by the public opinion of the community, which is expressed by popular gatherings beneath shady trees, after the old-world fashion of our Saxon fore-fathers, and much in the same way that the elders and people of Israel assembled at the gates of their cities to settle disputes about heritance and lands. According to the current idea there ought to be twelve officials in every village; but the number varies, and there are officers in some villages, who are not to be found in others. Each village has its head-man, who transacts all business with the ruling

[14] Manu, vii. 114.

[15] Elphinstone's *History of India*, Book ii. chapter 2.

authority; apportions the payment of land revenue among the villagers, according to the extent of these lands and the nature of their tenures; lets out lands which have no fixed occupants; and partitions the water for irrigation. He also settles disputes and apprehends offenders. All points of public interest are, however, arranged in free consultation with the villagers; and all disputes are decided with the assistance of arbitrators or assessors. The head-man is assisted by an accountant and a watchman. The accountant keeps the village records, manages the accounts, draws up deeds, and writes private letters when required. The watchman guards the boundaries of the villages, and those of the fields within the village; and he likewise watches the crops, and acts throughout the village as a constable, public guide, and messenger. In addition to these there is generally a Bráhman priest, who is sometimes an astrologer, and schoolmaster; a jeweller, who is also a money-changer; a smith, carpenter, barber, potter, and worker in leather. Sometimes, also, there is a tailor, washerman, physician, musician, and a poet, who is also a genealogist; and in the south of India there is generally a dancing-girl. The head-man and the accountant generally hold pieces of land, and sometimes receive allowances from government; but all the officials receive fees from the villagers, consisting either of money, or of a handful or two out of each measure of grain.[16]

These village communities have outlived dynasties, revolutions, invasions, and what appeared to be utter destruction. For years a village may have been depopulated by pillage and massacre; but still when tranquil times return, and possession is again possible, the scattered villagers will return to their old homesteads. A generation may pass away, but their sons will return, and re-establish the village on its ancient site, rebuild the houses which their fathers occupied, and again cultivate the fields which had been in the hands of their families from time immemorial.[17]

The code of Manu does not expressly define the constitution of the Hindu village, as it is laid down in the preceding paragraphs; but there seems every reason to believe that the village,

[16] Elphinstone.

[17] Sir Charles Metcalfe's minute, quoted by Elphinstone. See also Elphinstone's *History of India*, Book ii. chapter 3, which must always be regarded as a high authority on Indian revenue matters. Numerous other authorities have also been consulted, but specific references are unnecessary.

as it existed in the time when the code was promulgated, corresponded in all essentials with the village of the present day. The object of the lawgiver was not so much to define existing institutions, as to lay down laws and precepts; and, consequently, the data to be derived from the Institutes of Manu must be chiefly gathered from the laws respecting pastures and landmarks.

"A space for pasture," says Manu, "should be left round every village. In breadth it should be three hundred cubits, or three throws of a large stick. In the case of cities, or large towns, the surrounding pasture should be three times as broad. Every field bordering on the pasture land should be enclosed by a hedge, so high that a camel cannot look over it; and every gap through which a dog or a boar could thrust its head should be stopped. If the bordering fields are not enclosed in this manner, and cattle enter in and damage the rising crops, the herdsman of the cattle shall not be punished. If, however, cattle in charge of a herdsman work mischief in a field near a highway, the herdsman must be fined a hundred panas; but the owner of such a field ought to secure it against cattle that have no herdsman. In other fields the owner of cattle working mischief should be fined one pana and a quarter; but in all cases the value of the damaged grain must be paid. No fine should be levied for damage done by a cow within ten days of her calving; or by a bull which is kept for breeding purposes; or by cattle which have been consecrated to the deity."[18]

As regards boundaries and landmarks, the following directions are laid down in the code :

"In cases of dispute between two villages, or two landholders, respecting a boundary, the Raja, or his Judge, should investigate the matter in the month of Jaishtha, when the landmarks can be seen more distinctly than at other times. Some landmarks should be concealed under-ground, such as large pieces of stone, bones, tails of cows, bran. ashes, potsherds, bricks, tiles, charcoal, pebbles, sand, and other such substances, which are not corroded by the earth. Trees should also be planted along the charcoal, pebbles, sand, and other such substances, which are not corroded by the earth. Trees should also be planted along the boundary, with clustering shrubs and creepers. Lakes, wells,

[18] Manu, viii. 237—242.

pools, and streams, should also be made on the common limits; and temples dedicated to the gods should also be built there. By these marks, or by the course of a stream, or by long-continued possession, the Judge may ascertain the limit between the lands of two parties in litigation; but should there be still a doubt, he must have recourse to the declarations of witnesses. These witnesses should be examined in the presence of all the townsmen or villagers, or of both of the contending parties. They should put earth on their heads, and wear red mantles, and chaplets of red flowers; and they should be sworn by the reward of all their several good actions to give correct evidence concerning the boundaries; and their evidence should be recorded in writing, together with all their names. Those who give true evidence are absolved from all their sins; but such as give unjust evidence shall be fined two hundred panas. If no witnesses are forthcoming, four men who dwell on the four sides of the two villages should be called upon in the presence of the Raja to make a decision concerning the boundary. If there be no such neighbours dwelling on the sides of the two villages, nor any men whose ancestors had lived there since the villages were built, nor other inhabitants who could give evidence respecting the boundaries, the Judge must examine those who dwell in the jungle, such as hunters, fowlers, herdsmen, fishers, diggers for roots, snake-catchers, and gleaners, and fix the boundary between the two villages according to their evidence. As regards the bounds of arable fields, wells, pools, gardens, and houses, the testimony of the nearest neighbours on every side must be regarded as the best means of decision. Should they say anything untrue, each of them must be made to pay five hundred panas. If the boundary cannot be ascertained, the Raja should consult the future benefit of both parties, and make a boundary line between their lands." [19]

The scheme laid down by the code of Manu for the government of villages may be thus indicated :

"A Raja should appoint a lord of one village, a lord of ten villages, a lord of twenty villages, a lord of a hundred villages, and a lord of a thousand villages. The lord of one village should report any robberies, tumults, or other evils which may arise within his district, to the lord of ten villages. In like manner

[19] Manu, viii. 245, 265.

the lord of ten villages should report to the lord of twenty; the lord of twenty to the lord of a hundred; and the lord of a hundred to the lord of a thousand."[20]

Of all these officers, the head-man, or lord of a village, seems to be the only one who has retained his office intact to the present day; with this difference, however, that whereas in the time of the code the post was apparently in the gift of the Raja, it is now generally hereditary in a particular family. The division known as a Purgunnah appears to correspond to the hundred villages; but the officers employed in it are only known by their continuing to enjoy the hereditary lands or fees; or at the most by their being depositories of the registers and records connected with the purgunnah. The other divisions may also be faintly traced, but the occupations of the respective officers appear to have altogether passed away.[21]

The emoluments of the several provincial officers are clearly specified in the code. The head of a village was to receive as his daily perquisite, the fees of food, drink, fuel, and other articles, which according to the law ought to be presented by the villagers to the Raja. The fees from every village being thus appropriated by its respective head-man, a separate provision had to be made for the lords of many villages. The lord of ten villages was to receive the produce of two ploughed lands; the lord of twenty villages was to receive the produce of ten ploughed lands; but why the one should receive five times as much as the

[20] Manu, vii. 115—117.

[21] Elphinstone's *History of India.* The head-man of a village is called Patel in the Dekhan, and in the centre and west of Hindustan; Mandal in Bengal; and Mukaddam in many other places, especially where there are, or have lately been, hereditary village landholders. The accountant is called Patwari in Hindustan ; Kulkarni and Karnam in the Dekhan and south of India ; and Tallati in Guzerat. The watchman is called Pasban, Gorayet, Peik, Douraha, etc., in Hindustan ; Mhar in the Dekhan; Tillari in the south of India; Paggi in Guzerat. The lord of ten or twenty villages was called Naikwari, Tarref, etc. The lord of a hundred villages, or Purgunnah, is called Desmuk or Desai in the Dekhan, and his registrar is called Despandi ; in the north of India they are called Choudris and Canangos. The lords of a thousand villages were called Sirdesmuks in the Dekhan, and their provinces are called Sirkars. Their hereditary registrars are still to be found under the name of Sir Despandis. See Elphinstone's *Appendix.*

other is somewhat unintelligible. The lord of a hundred villages was to receive the entire produce of one village; and the lord of a thousand villages was to receive the produce of one large town.[22]

Besides these lords of villages, or districts, a Governor was to be appointed in every city or capital, with high rank and authority, for the supervision of the provincial administration, and especially to watch the proceedings of the lords and villages. This supervision appears to have been very necessary. According to the code, the servants of the Raja who were appointed to guard the villages, were generally knaves, who seized what belonged to other men; and it was suggested that the Raja should confiscate the property of such knaves, and banish them from the realm.[23]

The system of taxation is so clearly indicated in the code, that it would appear to have been universally understood and recognized by the entire community. The principle is laid down in the first instance, that the taxes should be so adjusted that whilst merchants and others should gain a fair profit, the Raja should receive a just compensation for the protection which he afforded to the whole community. Accordingly, in levying a tax upon trades, the Raja was to consider not only the prime cost of the goods and the prices at which they are sold, but also the cost of conveyance and travelling, the expense of subsistence, the outlay necessary for insuring the security of goods, and the net profits which remained after all these charges had been defrayed. In this manner the Raja was to draw an annual revenue from his dominions by little and little; just as the leech, the bee, and the sucking calf take in their natural food. Here a new idea is expressed, which is unknown to modern taxation. The assessment was made not on the incomes of the people; but on what might be regarded as their yearly savings. Thus the Raja was to take one-fiftieth of all the cattle, gems, and gold and silver, which his subjects added every year to their capital stock; a law which not only furnished a convenient pretext for oppression and confiscation, but probably originated those habits of hoarding wealth in concealment, which have characterized the people for ages, but which are now fast disappearing from all

[22] Manu, vii. 118, 119.
[23] Ib. vii. 121—124.

parts of the country. As regards land revenue, the Raja was to take one-sixth, one-eighth, or one-twelfth of the grain produce, according to the difference of soil. He was also to take one-sixth of the clear annual increase of trees, flesh-meat, honey, ghee, perfumes, medicinal substances, liquids, flowers, roots, fruit, gathered leaves, potherbs, grass, earthen pots, articles made of leather and cane, and all things made of stone. The meaner inhabitants of the Raj, who lived by petty traffic, were only to be required to pay a mere trifle to the Raja as an annual tax; whilst those who supported themselves by labour, such as low handicraftsmen, artificers, and others, were required to give one day's labour every month to the Raja. But even though the Raja might be dying of want, he was never to receive any tax from a Bráhman who was learned in the Veda.[24]

But whilst the right of the Raja to levy taxes is duly maintained, the corresponding duty of protection on his part is asserted with a persistency which seems to intimate that it was frequently neglected.

"The Raja," says Manu, "who takes a sixth part of the grain, together with the market duties and tolls, and the small daily presents for his household, and the fines for offenders, and yet fails to protect his subjects, the same will fall after death into a region of horror. By protecting his people a Raja obtains a sixth part of all their religious merits; but by failing to protect them he will be visited by a sixth part of all their iniquities."[25]

The administration of justice, which finds expression in the code of Manu, seems to be little more than a Brahmanizing of the old patriarchal system, in which the Raja dispensed justice according to his own rude and primitive notions of right and wrong. A scheme is laid down by which the Raja may administer justice, or employ a deputy who is a Bráhman; but in the former case he is to be guided by the interpretations of the Bráhmans. The laws themselves refer to trust property, property which has no owner, lost property, treasure trove, and stolen goods; also to debts, money lending, sureties, deposits, false testimony, oaths, and ordeals; and finally, to damage to cattle,

[24] Manu, vii. 127—138.
[25] Ib. viii. 302—311.

neglect of lands, and inheritance in the case of undivided and divided families. These may now be indicated in due order.

The administration of justice by a Raja, assisted by Bráhmans, is thus laid down in the code :

"A Raja," says Manu, "should enter his Court of Justice with a grave and composed demeanour, and be accompanied by Bráhmans and Counsellors capable of advising him. There he should take his seat in suitable attire, with his mind attentively fixed, and should decide cases according to the law. Should he desire it, a Bráhman who is not a sacrificial priest, may interpret the law to him; but if a Raja looks stupidly on whilst cases are being decided by a Sudra, his Raj will be troubled like a cow who is sinking in deep mire. When the Raja cannot preside in person, he should appoint a Bráhman of eminent learning to be Chief Judge, accompanied by three Bráhmans to sit as Assessors; and this assembly is called the Court of Brahma with four faces." [26]

"The Raja, or the Chief Judge appointed by the Raja, should commence proceedings by doing reverence to the deities who guard the world, and then enter on the trial of causes. He should understand what is expedient or inexpedient, but he should consider only what is law or not law; and in this spirit he should examine all disputes between parties in the order of their several castes. He should see through the thoughts of men by their voice, colour, countenance, limbs, eyes, and action; for the internal workings of the mind are to be discovered from the limbs, the look, the motion of the body, the gesticulaiton, the speech, and the changes of the eye and face." [27]

The more important precepts of Manu as regards property are as follows :

"Property should be held in trust by the Raja, when it belongs to a Brahmachári or an infant, until the Brahmachári has ceased his studentship, or until the infant has attained his sixteenth year. In like manner, property must be held in trust by the Raja when it belongs to a barren woman, or to a woman without sons, or to women without kindred, or to women whose husbands are in distant places, or to widows who are true to their lords, or to women who are afflicted with sickness. Such

[26] Manu, viii. 1—11 ; 20—22. [27] Ib. viii. 23—26.

kinsmen as appropriate the property of women who are yet living should be punished by a just Raja with the severity due to thieves." [28]

"Property for which no owner appears may be detained by the Raja for three years; if the owner appear within that time he may take his property, but otherwise it may be confiscated by the Raja. The Raja may take a sixth, or a tenth, or a twelfth of the property which has been so detained by him." [29]

"Property which has been lost by one man and found by another should be secured by the Raja, who should commit it to the care of trustworthy men. If any should be convicted of stealing such property, the Raja should condemn the thief to be trampled upon by an elephant. If the right owner should claim the property, the Raja may restore it to him, after deducing a sixth or a twelfth part. But if a man set up a false claim, he may be fined either an eighth of his own property, or else a proportion of the value of the goods which he has falsely claimed."[30]

"A learned Bráhman who finds a hidden treasure may take it without any deduction being made to the Raja, for he is lord of all. But if the treasure be discovered by the Raja, he may lay up half in his treasury, and give the other half to the Bráhmans. The Raja is entitled to the half of all treasure trove and precious minerals, in return for the general protection which he affords, and because he is the lord paramount of all the soil."[31]

"All property seized by robbers must be restored by the Raja to the rightful owners, whatever may be their caste; for a Raja who keeps the stolen goods for himself incurs the guilt of a robber."[32]

The foregoing laws thus seem to refer to a period when the administration was more patriarchal in its character than it became in later years. The Raja appears as the guardian of all infants and unprotected women, and to hold their property in trust. He also detained all unclaimed property, and it is remarkable that any one stealing such property was to be trampled to death by an elephant; the severity of the sentence being pro-

[28] Manu, viii. 27—29.

[29] Ib. viii. 30—33.

[30] Ib. viii. 34—36

[31] Ib. viii. 37—39.

[32] Ib. viii. 40.

bably caused by the frequency of the crime.[33] The privileges of Bráhmans as regards treasure trove have already been treated elsewhere.

The laws as regards debts, money-lending, sureties, and deposits, are as follows :

"When a creditor sues a debtor before the Raja, the debtor should be required by the Raja to pay whatever is proved to be true, together with a small fine. Should a defendant deny the debt, then the plaintiff must call a witness who was present when the loan was made, or produce other evidence. When a defendant admits a debt he must pay a fine of five per cent. ; but if he denies the debt, and it be afterwards proved against him, he must pay a fine of ten per cent."[34]

"A money-lender may take an eightieth part of a hundred, or one and a quarter per cent., as interest per month for the money lent, provided he has a pledge. But if the money-lender has no pledge he may take two per cent. as a month's interest. He may also take interest per month according to the caste of the borrower ; that is, two per cent. from the Bráhman, three per cent. from a Kshatriya, four per cent. from a Vaisya, and five per cent. from a Sudra. Stipulated interest beyond the legal rate is invalid, and is called usury."[35]

"A lender of interest on safe carriage, who has agreed on the place and time, shall not receive such interest, if the goods are not carried to the place, or within the time. The amount of interest should be settled by men well acquainted with sea voyages and journey by land."[36]

"The man who becomes surety for the appearance of a debtor, and does not produce him, shall be liable for the debt ; but the son of such a surety shall not be liable ; nor shall a son be liable for money which his father has idly promised to musicians and actresses, or lost at play, or owes for spirituous liquors, or for the balance of a fine or toll. If, however, the father shall have been surety for the payment of the money, and not for the

[33] A sepoy convicted of conspiracy was subjected by the Gaikwad of Baroda to this demoralizing punishment as late as 1866 ; but since then, at the instigation of the paramount power, the punishment of elephant trampling has been abolished by the Gaikwad.

[34] Manu, viii. 47—59. [35] Ib. viii. 152. [36] Ib. viii. 156, 157.

mere appearance of the debtor, then his heirs may be compelled to discharge the debt. Again, if a debtor borrows money and expends it for the use of his family, and afterwards dies, the money must be paid by that family, whether it be divided or undivided, out of the estate."[37]

"If a defendant refuses to restore a deposit, and there are no witnesses, the judge should employ artful spies to deposit gold with the same man; then if the defendant restore the deposit given to him by the spies, there is nothing against him; but if he refuse to restore it, he shall be compelled to pay the value of both deposits."[38]

The foregoing details call for very brief observations. Those which refer to debts and interest are perfectly simple; and the interest chargeable per month is quite in accordance with modern custom, although it may appear exorbitant in European eyes. The law which relates to the lender of interest on the safe carriage of goods despatched by land or sea, seems to approximate as regards sea voyages to the English law of bottomry; in which the owner of the ship borrows money on the security of his ship, and is not called upon to repay the advance unless the vessel returns in safety. The text is valuable as it indicates that sea voyages are not unknown to the Hindus in the time of Manu; although later Pandits have declared that voyages by sea were only permissible in the yugas which preceded the age of Kali. The law as regards sureties was invested with a moral significance in connection with musicians and actresses, gaming and drinking, which is eminently Brahmanical; but its efficacy in restraining men from such amusements may well be doubted. The law as regards deposits betrays that talent for artifice which still characterizes the Hindu.

The laws respecting false testimony, oaths, and ordeals, are as follows:

"A witness who knowingly says anything different from that which he had seen or heard, will fall headlong after death into a region of horror, and be debarred from heaven. In some cases, however, the witness who gives false evidence from a pious motive, shall not lose a seat in heaven; such evidence is called by wise men the speech of the gods. Whenever the death of a

[37] Manu, viii. 158—160, 166. [38] Ib. viii. 182—184.

man, whether a Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, or Sudra, would be occasioned by true evidence, falsehood may be spoken, and is even preferable to truth. Such witnesses must offer cakes and milk as oblations to the goddess Saraswati; and thus they will fully expiate the venial sin of benevolent falsehood."[39]

"No man should take an oath in vain on a trifling occasion, or he will be punished both in this life and in the next; but it is not a deadly sin to take a light oath to women at a time of dalliance, or on a proposal of marriage, or in the case of grass or fruit eaten by a cow, or of wood taken for a sacrifice, or of a promise made for the preservation of a Bráhman."[40]

The want of veracity displayed in the foregoing laws unfortunately continues to be a characteristic of the Hindus; and may possibly have originated the trial by ordeal, which is applied by the code to witnesses alone. Manu says:

"Sometimes a witness may be required to hold fire, or to dive under water, or to touch the heads of his children and wife; and if the fire does not burn him, or if the water does not speedily force him to the surface, or if he does not speedily meet with misfortune, his testimony must be held to be true."[41]

The law respecting damages to cattle is chiefly remarkable for its pastoral simplicity. Manu says:

"If any damage or hurt as regards cattle takes place in the day-time, the blame falls on the herdsman; but if it takes place in the night-time, the blame falls on the owner, if the cattle be kept in his own house. The wages of herdsmen are paid in milk, and they may with the assent of the master milk the best cow out of ten; the wages, however, may be paid in a different mode. If a beast has strayed through want of care on the part of the herdsman, and has been destroyed by reptiles, or killed by dogs, or has died by falling into a pit, the herdsman should make good the loss; but he should not be required to do so if the beast has been carried off by robbers, and if, after proclamation and pursuit, he gives notice to his master. When cattle die, the herdsman should carry their ears, hides, tails, and other portions to his master, and also point out their limbs. When a flock of sheep or goats is attacked by wolves, and the herdsman does not

[39] Manu viii. 75, 103—105.
[40] Ib. viii. 111, 112.
[41] Ib. viii. 114, 115.

go out to repel the attack, he shall make good every sheep or goat that is slain; but if, whilst they are grazing together near a wood, a wolf suddenly springs out and kills one, the herdsman shall not be responsible."[42]

The law respecting neglect of land is of real significance. The question of whether land in India was originally the property of the sovereign or the cultivator, has long been a subject of controversy. It has been ruled that the Raja was not the actual owner of the soil, but only the owner of a share of the crop. According, however, to Manu, the cultivator is not only bound to pay the established share of the crop to the Raja, but is under an obligation to keep the land in good cultivation, so that the Raja should be no loser by any negligence. Manu says:

"If land be injured by the fault or neglect of the farmer, he shall be called upon to pay ten times as much as the Raja's share of the crop; but if the injury has been caused by the fault of his servants without his knowledge, he shall only be called upon to pay five times the Raja's share."[43]

The question of land tenures in India can, however, only be decided in dealing with the later periods of Hindu history.

The law as regards undivided and divided families involves a change in the national usage which is of some significance. Manu says:

"After the death of the father and mother, the brothers may assemble and divide among themselves the paternal estate; but they have no power over it while their parents live [unless the father choose to distribute it]. The elder brother may take entire possession of the patrimony; and the others may live under him, as they lived under their father [unless they choose to be separated]."[44]

Here it should be remarked that the passages within brackets are not to be found in the original texts, but are the glosses of Kulluka, the commentator. The inference therefore seems to follow that in ancient times the general custom was for families to live undivided; but that as society progressed, the practice of dividing the family property among the several members came

[42] Manu, viii. 230—236.
[43] Ib. viii. 243.
[44] Ib. ix. 104, 105.

gradually into vogue. A very large proportion of Hindu families are still undivided.

Criminal law amongst the Hindus presents but few points of significance. Those relating to breaches of caste, and injury to women, have already been treated in foregoing chapters. The laws respecting theft are, however, worthy of special notice from their extreme severity. Manu says :

"Burglars who break a wall or partition, and commit theft in the night, should have their hands lopped off, and be impaled over a sharp stake. Cutpurses should be deprived of two fingers for a first offence; of a hand and foot for a second; and suffer death for a third. Those who furnish a thief with fire, food, arms, or apartments, or who receive a thing stolen, should receive the same punishment as the thief. The seller of bad grain for good, and the destroyer of landmarks, should suffer such corporal punishment as will disfigure them. But the worst of all cheats is a goldsmith; and if such a man commits fraud, the Raja should order him to be cut to pieces with razors."[45]

The laws of war, as laid down in the code of Manu, present the same strange intermingling of conflicting ideas, which have already been referred to the opposition between the Kshatriya and the Bráhman, between the Vedic period and the Brahmanic period. Moreover, they exhibit that two-fold opposition, which has already been noticed as existing in each period; namely :

First, the opposition which existed in the Vedic age between warlike community and a peaceful community, the worshippers of Indra and the worshippers of the Maruts.

Secondly, the opposition which prevailed in the Brahmanic period between the soldier and the priest, the Kshatriya and the Bráhman.

Each of these four elements may be traced in the laws respecting war; but the reference of each element to one of the four communities in question is only apparent and probable, and cannot be proved. Thus it is easy to refer all precepts implying praise of valour and contempt of cowardice to a warlike community; but it is difficult to classify such sentiments into Vedic and Brahmanic; although Brahmanic precepts may be occasionally

[45] Manu, ix. 276—278, 291, 292.

detected by their association with the dogma of merits and demerits which especially belongs to the Brahmanic age. So, in like manner, the references to the value of alliances and diplomacy, and the benevolent laws respecting quarter and fair fighting, may be referred to a peaceful community of priests; but it is difficult to say decisively whether they originated in Vedic times or in Brahmanic times ; although, as already seen in the war of the Mahábhárata, such precepts were but little regarded by the Kshatriyas of the Vedic period.

The laws of war laid down in the code of Manu may now be treated under four several heads, of duties of Rajas in defensive warfare, duties of Rajas in offensive warfare, rules as regards quarter and fair fighting, and treatment of a conquered country. These may now be considered in order.

The duty of a Raja when placed upon the defensive was very simple. Manu says :

"Whenever a Raja is threatened by an enemy of equal or superior force, he must never turn his face from battle, nor forget the duties of the Kshatriya caste to which he belongs, namely, to accept every challenge, to protect the general community, and to honour the Bráhmans. Every Raja who fights briskly to the last will ascend to heaven immediately after death."[46] "The soldier who turns his back to the enemy out of fear, and happens to be slain by his foes, shall take upon his own soul all the sins of his Commander, and shall give to his Commander all the merits of his own virtuous acts."[47]

Here the incongruity of Brahmanic and Vedic ideas seems abundantly manifest. The Brahmanic dogma of merits and demerits, has been superadded to the old Kshatriya notion, which finds even fuller expression in the Scandinavian belief, that the soul of the valiant soldier who fell in battle would ascend to the heaven of Odin, whilst the coward, or man who died a natural death, descended to the hell of Nifiheim. The duties of a Raja after the commencement of the war are of a somewhat hesitating character.

"When a Raja", says Manu, "perceives that his subjects are firm in their allegiance, and feels that he is powerful against the

[46] Manu, vii. 87—89. [47] Ib. vii. 87—89.

enemy, he should stand on the defensive. When a Raja knows that his own troops are in good spirits and well supplied, and that his enemy is disheartened and ill provided, he should eagerly march against him. On the other hand, when a Raja is expecting reinforcements, and suffering but little injury meanwhile, he should temporize. When he finds himself weak in troops and beasts of burden, he should remain quietly in camp, and endeavour to make terms. When he perceives that his enemy is in every way stronger than himself, he should detach a portion of his army to amuse the foe, and meantime secure his own safety in some inaccessible locality. When he finds himself open to attack on all sides, he should seek the protection of a just and powerful Raja, and propitiate him with all the honours which should be paid to a father. But should a Raja find that the alliance is a source of evil, he should wage war alone. In a word, a Raja should so conduct his affairs, that neither an ally, nor a neutral, nor an enemy should ever gain an advantage over him; and this is the sum of political wisdom."[48]

The duty of a Raja in offensive warfare is of a decided character.

"When a Raja", says Manu, "invades the territory of an enemy, he should advance towards the enemy's metropolis. He should commence his march either in the spring or in the autumn, so that he may find either the vernal or the autumnal crops on the ground; but if he has a clear prospect of victory, or if his enemy is weakened by disasters, he may commence his march at any season. He must always, however, be upon his guard against secret friends who are in the service of a hostile Raja; and against all those who bring messages from the enemy's camp. On a plain he should fight with chariots and cavalry; in a region where there is water, he should fight on boats and elephants; in a woody country he should fight with bows and arrows; and where the ground is clear he should fight with swords and targets, and other weapons adapted to those quarters. In blockading an enemy, a Raja should sit encamped, and lay waste the surrounding country; spoiling the grass, wells, fuel, and trenches of the enemy, and harassing him night and day. A Raja should secretly gain over all such leading men from the side of his

[48] Manu, vii. 94, 95.

enemy as can be brought in with safety. He should keep himself thoroughly informed of all that his enemies are doing ; and then when a fortunate moment is offered by heaven, he should give battle without hesitation. At the same time, however, he should be more desirous of reducing his enemy by negotiation, or by suitable bribes, or by creating dissension, than by risking all upon a battle."[49]

The rules as regard fair fighting and quarter are identical with those which are laid down in the Mahábhárata. Manu says :

"Men should not fight with concealed weapons, nor with arrows mischievously barbed, nor with poisoned arrows, nor with darts blazing with fire. Again, a horseman, or a soldier in a chariot, should not fight a man who is on foot. Quarter should be given to the following individuals, namely : one who sues for life with joined hand ; one whose hair is loose and obstructs his sight ; one who is sitting down fatigued ; one who surrenders himself a prisoner ; one who is asleep ; one who has lost his coat of mail ; one who is disarmed ; one who is only looking on, or fighting another man ; one who is grievously wounded, or terrified, and one who is running away."[50]

The course to be followed by a Raja after a conquest is worthy of notice, as it may possibly throw light upon the policy by which the Aryan conquerors established their empire over Hindustan. Manu says :

"When a Raja has conquered a country, he should respect the deities which are worshipped in that country, as well as the virtuous priests of those deities. He should also distribute largesses, and reassure the people by loud proclamation. He should respect the laws of the country, and place it under a Prince of the royal race, and gratify him with presents of jewels. Or he may form an alliance with the Raja whom he has conquered, and act in unison with him. He should also pay due attention to any Raja who has supported his cause, and to any Raja who has been hostile to his ally ; so that both from an ally and an enemy he may secure the fruit of his expedition. By securing a firm ally a Raja obtains greater strength than by gaining wealth and territory."

[49] Manu, vii. 181—199.

[50] Ib. vii. 90—93.

These precepts are curious, inasmuch as they exhibit the Oriental custom of conciliating a people and consolidating a conquest. No change of rulers was carried out, and no change of laws; and an alliance was merely formed for the purpose of increasing the military strength of the conqueror, without any reference whatever to the moral or material welfare of the people. The utter failure of this policy to maintain order and law, and to provide for the defence of the country at large, will form hereafter one of the most important political lessons, which are to be gathered from the history of India under Indian rule.

CHAPTER XIV

HISTORICAL RESUME

It is true that the ideas and institutions of the Vedic Aryans have been distinguished from those of the Bráhmans; and so far the task may be regarded as satisfactory; inasmuch as the two periods have for ages been blended into one in the belief of the people of India. But with this exception, the ordinary requirements of history appear to be altogether wanting. Imagination may fill the ear with the roar of distant ages, and please the eye with visions of primeval men; but there is no vista of the past carrying the mind back by successive stages to the earliest glimmer of legend. Two pictures are certainly presented, one of the Vedic times, and the other of Brahmanic times; and it appears to be established that the two differed widely from each other. But in each case there is a want of chronological sequence. The annals of the Vedic Aryans, and the annals of the Bráhmans, are alike unknown; and no record whatever has been preserved of the circumstances under which the two have been blended together; although the process by which the ideas and institutions of the Vedic age have been Brahmanized in the Hindu literature has been partially explained. The question, therefore, remains to be solved of whether it is possible, by comparing the different phases of civilizations which appear to belong to different Epic traditions, to discover the clue to a choronological sequence, which shall in any degree correspond to the notion of annals that is implied in the modern idea of history.

Before, however, attempting this task, it will be necessary to define clearly the limits of the inquiry. Many questions have been passed over in the present work, which have been largely and profitably discussed by eminent Sanskrit scholars, and especially by the great school of German philology of which Lassen and Weber may be regarded as representatives. Among these questions may be mentioned the origin of the Vedic people, and their apparent line of march before they entered the Punjab; the interpretation of Vedic myths by reference to natural pheno-

mena; the reduction of traditions of individual heroes into allegorical histories of tribes or clans; and the classification of Vedic and Brahmanic literature into epochs, like that which has been attempted with no much success by Max Muller. The importance of these inquiries, as contributions to the history of human development, cannot be denied; but they can scarcely be regarded as having a direct bearing upon a history of the Hindus, which has been mainly undertaken for the purpose of illustrating the civilization and institutions of the people, with especial reference to their present condition and future prospects, and to the political relations of the British Government with the great Indian feudatories of the crown. Moreover, an exhaustive investigation of these points would necessitate a preliminary training of many years in purely philolcgicai studies; and such a training would tend to wean away the mind from such historical criticism as is based upon the lives of men, rather than upon their languages. Finally, with all respect for the eminent scholars whose names have been mentioned, grave doubts may perhaps be expressed as regards the reduction of many of the Epic traditions into descriptions of natural phenomena, or allegorical histories of tribes or clans. That the hymns of the Rig-Veda abound with mythical allusions of the former character cannot be doubted; and Max Muller's translation of the hymns has opened up a new field of thought in this direction.

But, as regards the Hindu legends in the Epics, another question has to be taken into consideration; namely, whether natural phenomena has not often been described in language and illustrated by incidents, which have been borrowed from authentic tradition. Again, it is a comparatively easy task to select certain incidents in the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana, and point out the striking resemblance which they bear to astronomical phenomena; but it would be as easy to select certain incidents from modern history and biography, in which the resemblance would be equally startling. Unless, therefore, the upholders of the so-called mythological theory are prepared to show that the whole of the Epics are amenable to a mythological interpretation, their method may possibly prove an *ignis fatuus*, tending in many cases to lead the student astray from the beaten track of authentic tradition into the field of conjectural allegory. The attempts which have been made to transmute the Tale of Troy, and indeed the whole

mass of Greek legends, into similar myths, can by no means be regarded as satisfactory; and other attempts which have been made to reduce the sacred traditions of the Hebrews to the same category are still more open to criticism. The same remarks would in some measure apply to the theory which would reduce some of the traditions of individual heroes into allegorical histories of tribes or clans. Here, however, a distinction must be laid down between mythological legends of the gods, and what appear to be historical traditions of heroes. Legends of Indra and other gods, and the wars between gods and demons, appear to be generally capable of allegorical interpretation. But the case seems somewhat different as regards the Epic traditions of individual heroes, who have never been admitted into the Hindu Pantheon, or who have only been deified at a comparatively recent period. As regards this latter class of traditions, the simple method has been preferred of stripping the authentic tradition as far as possible of what appeared to be the Brahmanical accumulations of a later period, and thus attempting to restore the original story as far as may be to its pristine form; referring the Brahmanical additions to the later age in which they seem to have originated, and proposing to consider them hereafter in connection with the history of the period to which they appear to belong, namely, the age of Brahmanical revival. This method is left to stand upon its merits. Indeed, controversy would be out of place in the present work, and is, perhaps, best avoided; and the allegorical modes of interpretation are thus left to rest upon the authority of the eminent scholars by whom they have been suggested.[1]

The first scene in the history of India opens upon the Aryan occupation of the Punjab. A teeming population had apparently been settled for generations, and perhaps for centuries, in the land of the five or seven rivers. That the people had attained a certain civilization is evident from the allusions to houses, chariots, mailed armour, ships, and merchandise, which are to be found in the Vedic hymns as well as in the Epics.

[1] It is much to be regretted that the works of the leading continental Orientalists have not been reproduced in an English form. In India there are many scholars, both Indian and European, who would be glad of such a republication of the works of Lassen, Weber, and some others, who are at present only known at second-hand or by reputation.

Their means of subsistence appear to have been generally drawn from lands and cattle; and doubtless their civilization varied, not only according to the affluence or otherwise of different families, but according to the fact of whether they dwelt in long established and well protected villages, or in new and outlying settlements recently cleared from the jungle, and bordering on an alien population. In that remote period the river Saraswati flowed into the Indus; and it is easy to infer from hymns already quoted, that a line of Aryan settlements was to be found on the banks of both rivers. In the subsequent age of Brahmanism, the Aryans had conquered Hindustan, and the geography of the region bordering on the Saraswati had almost faded away from the national memory; and but little was known beyond the fact that the river itself disappeared in the sand long before it reached the Indus. The period between the establishment of Vedic settlements on the Saraswati, and the Aryan conquest of Hindustan, probably covers an interval of thousands of years; and yet the only positive facts which have been preserved in connection with this period are the disappearance of the Saraswati and the rise of Brahmanism. Certain inferences, however, may be drawn from the Epic legends and traditions which have been reproduced in the present work, as well as from obscure and isolated allusions in other sacred books. It should, however, be added that whatever may have been the date in which the Epics and Institutes of Manu received their present form, the old Vedic and Brahmanic ages preceded the advent of Buddhism; and, consequently, they preceded the invasion of Alexander, and cannot be illustrated by the coins and inscriptions which have been hitherto discovered, and which appear to belong to a later era. Probably, however, it will be seen hereafter that the history of the Buddhist period furnishes further illustrations of the Brahmanic era, in the same way that Brahmanic literature has been found to furnish illustrations of the Vedic period.

Under such circumstances it may perhaps be as well to compare the different phases of civilization which appear to characterize different legends, and then to attempt a classification of the results in a form corresponding to annals. In the history of every people of which a record has been preserved there appear to have been three political stages, namely : 1st, The Patriarchal. 2nd, The Heroic. 3rd, The Monarchical.

Each of these stages, however, may be more or less modified by three different and powerful elements, which have their origin in human nature, and are more or less common to all classes of the community, namely : 1st, The instinctive desires which develope into passions. 2nd, The yearning after individual freedom and power, which finds expression in democracy. 3rd, The higher aspirations after temporal and spiritual good, which are involved in the conception of religion.[2]

A critical narrative of the modifications produced upon the three stages of political development by the instincts, the yearnings of democracy, and the aspirations of religion, would form the very essence of history; and would prove infinitely more valuable than the narratives of migrations, wars, and court intrigues, to which the name of history has been often improperly applied. Accordingly, it may be advisable to arrange the historical conclusions to be gathered from the Hindu traditions as far as possible under the three heads of patriarchal, heroic, and monarchical; and at the same time to inquire step by step how far each stage in Hindu history has been modified by the three influences indicated.

The most valuable illustrations of the patriarchal age of Hindu history are perhaps to be gathered from the tradition of the great war of Bhárata, and the episode, which describes the adventures of the Pándavas in the court of Raja Viráta. These two stories present important differences as regards religious belief, and must, therefore, be considered separately.

The tradition of the war of Bhárata involves in the first instance the settlement of a family at Hastinápur on the banks of the upper Ganges, which had been conquered and cleared by a remote ancestor. The pursuits of this family were eminently patriarchal. The cultivation of land is implied, though not directly expressed; probably because according to the caste system, which was fully in force when the tradition was reduced to its present form, the cultivation of land was left to the Vaisyas and Sudras. The keeping of cattle, however, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that the younger members of the family

[2] This classification is not strictly logical, as democratic and religious yearnings might with certain reservations be reckoned amongst the instincts. But the classification is practical and intelligible, and controversy is avoided by its adoption.

were accustomed to go out into the pastures at regular intervals for the purpose of marking all the calves, and re-marking all the older cattle. There were two branches in the family, namely, the sons of a reigning Chieftain who were named Kauravas, and those of a deceased Chieftain who were named Pándavas. All were brought up together and trained to defend their crops and cattle against enemies and robbers; and thus they were all more or less proficient in pugilism, wrestling, archery, throwing stones, casting nooses, and hurling chakras. As regards enemies there appears to have been a feud with a neighbouring Raja named Drupada; whilst the Bhils in the neighbourhood were kept in strict subordination.

Subsequently a breach arose between the Kauravas and Pándavas; and the Kauravas remained behind at Hastinápur, whilst the five Pándavas went out with their mother, and founded a new settlement at Indra-prastha on the banks of the Jumná.

An episode occurs in connection with this new settlement, which illustrates the prevailing idea as regards marriage. Monogamy and polygamy seem to have been recognized institutions in the family history of the settlement at Hastinápur; but otherwise there appears to have been little sentiment in the marriage unions. A young damsel was induced to become the wife of an aged Chieftain, by the promise that any sons she might bear him should inherit the estate to the exclusion of the heir-apparent. In another case three young sisters were carried away by force to be the wives of a young Raja. Again, the widows of a deceased Kshatriya were made over on his death to his nearest kinsmen, in order that sons might be begotten to inherit the family estate. Lastly, before the Pándavas commenced clearing a new settlement at Indra-prastha, they married one woman amongst them, according to a depraved custom which finds expression in the Vedic hymns; the eldest brother being regarded as the real husband of the lady, whilst the younger brothers were permitted to share his privileges.[3]

[3] The idea which prevails amongst the Bhutias, who still practise polyandry, is that a younger brother is entitled to a share of the wife of the eldest brother until he procured a wife of his own ; and that in return for this privilege he is bound to render personal service to the household, and is expected to make some presents to the wife. The question of parentage is settled by the mother.

Glimpses of the old colonial life of the five brothers and their joint wife at Indra-prastha, frequently appear beneath the dense overgrowth of later myths. The daily meals were apparently cooked and distributed amongst the brothers, first by the mother and afterwards by the joint wife. The Pándavas cleared their land by burning down the jungle; and in so doing they appear to have come into collision with a Scythian tribe of Nágas or snake worshippers. After the Pándavas had established themselves at Indra-prastha, they gave a great banquet, called a Rajasuya, which appears to have been an assertion of possession or sovereignty, but which is represented in the Mahábhárata as a great sacrifice to Indra and the other Vedic deities. Subsequently the Kauravas challenged the Pándavas to a gambling match; and the Pándavas lost both their estate or Raj, and their wife Dhrupadi; but were subsequently permitted to depart with Draupadi, on the condition that they should absent themselves for thirteen years. The residence in the jungle is chiefly valuable from an illustration which it furnishes of an ancient law, that a wife should never be captured until her husband or husbands had been first conquered.

The feud between the Kauravas and Pándavas was subsequently settled by a terrible war; and the narrative becomes more fruitful of illustrations of patriarchal times. The negotiations which preceded the war appear to have been carried on in an age when writing was unknown, for messages were sent between the rival parties by word of mouth. The war which ensued between the Kauravas and Pándavas was almost like a savage contest between wild beasts. The warriors fought with their fists, feet, and teeth; and cut and hewed and mangled and maimed each other with knives and clubs. Sometimes they threw an enemy down, and knelt upon his breast, and cut off his head; and in one case a warrior drank the blood of his slaughtered enemy with wild exultations of joy. The victory was ultimately gained by the Pándavas, but on the night of their final triumph, their camp was broken open by an ally of the Kauravas who had survived the fray, and their five sons were slaughtered, and the bleeding heads carried off as trophies of the revenge which had been achieved. The Pándavas resigned themselves as they best could to this fearful blow, and ultimately effected a reconciliation with their uncle, whose sons had fallen

in the war. They performed the funeral rites of the slain, which are remarkable as showing the absence of all idea of burning the living widow with the dead husband. Finally, the Pándavas returned in triumph to the old family inheritance, and inaugurated their eldest brother Yudhishthira as Raja ; and eventually asserted his supremacy as lord paramount of all the neighbouring Rajas, by the celebration of an Aswamedha. In this significant ceremony a horse was let loose by the Pándavas to wander where it pleased; a proceeding which was regarded as a challenge to all the neighbouring Rajas either to acknowledge their submission by letting the horse alone, or to hazard a battle by leading it away. After the lapse of a certain time, said to be a year, during which the Pándavas had asserted and maintained their suzerainty by conquering all who interfered with the horse, a great feast was held, in which the horse was killed and roasted as a sacrifice to Indra, and then served up to the conquered Rajas who attended as guests.

The story of the great war is followed by some myths, which throw a curious light upon the subsequent fortunes of the reigning house at Hastinápur. These myths seem to refer to some ancient wars between the Aryans and Scythian Nágas, or snake-worshippers. Parikshit, who succeeded Yudhishthira in the Raj, is said to have been killed by a snake, which seems to indicate that he was slain by a Nága. In revenge his son Janmenjaya is said to have performed a sacrifice of snakes, in which the snakes were irresistibly impelled by the divine power of the sacrificing Bráhman to enter the sacred flame; a myth which seems to cover a tradition of some treacherous messacre of Scythic Nágas at a great banquet. In later legends these Nágas are identified with the Buddhists; and it is not improbable that these legends denote the subsequent overthrow of the reigning dynasty in the neighbourhood of Delhi by a Buddhist conqueror.

The illustrations of the patriarchal period, which are furnished by the tradition of the great war of Bhárata, may be further amplified by a consideration of the modifications of the patriarchal stage of human development, which were produced by the instincts, the yearnings of democracy, and the aspirations of religion. At such an early period the instincts appear to have had full play, and the passions became the dominant powers.

The Pándavas sacrificed all sentiment to instinct by taking one wife amongst them. They were driven by sheer want to clear out lands and keep cattle in a distant jungle, where they appear to have been surrounded by enemies and robbers. Finally, after they had lost their cleared lands at a gambling match, they were impelled partly by want, and partly by a passion for revenge, to enter upon a bloody fratricidal war, which terminated in the destruction of their rival kinsmen. In like manner the rude democratic yearnings and uncultured religious aspirations partook of the nature of instincts. The young men simply struggled against the authority of the elders, and plunged into a war to the knife contrary to the sober counsel of experienced age. The religious idea consisted in offering to their rude national or tribal gods such savoury meat as pleased themselves, for the sake of imparting a superstitious significance to the possession of cultivated land, and to the assertion of superiority over their neighbours. A few sentiments, chiefly in reference to war, seem to have been more or less recognized by the warrior caste of the patriarchal period. The precept that a wife should not be carried away as prize until her husband had been conquered, has already been noticed. To this may be added the notion that a challenge should always be accepted; that a third party should never interfere whilst two combatants are fighting; that death is to be preferred to dishonour; and that revenge is more or less a virtue. Indeed, the Oriental passion for revenge can only be kept within bounds by a system of order and law, like that which prevailed under British administration; and it has always attained a fearful growth both in the patriarchal age, and in the heroic time which follows it, when each man does what seems right in his own eyes. The terrible massacre perpetrated by the sons of Jacob, in revenge for the seduction of their sister Dinah by the Prince of Shechem, is a striking illustration of the force of this sentiment. So too is the episode in the life of Samson, whose Philistine wife had been given away by her father to one of his companions; and who thereupon set on fire the standing corn of the Philistines by attaching firebrands to the tails of three hundred foxes. In return for this outrage the Philistines burnt both the faithless wife and her offending father; and again in revenge for this atrocity the Hebrew slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass. The history

of Indian rule has for ages been characterized by the story of such bloody feuds, excepting when order has been maintained and justice administered by a paramount power. The tribes beyond the pale of the North-West frontier, who are also more or less beyond the pale of British administration, are probably the relics of the time when the sons of Pándu fought the sons of Dhritaráshtra; and formerly a Sepoy in the pay of the British Government, who had been enlisted from these frontier tribes, would occasionally take a furlough for the definite purpose of settling some old family feud by the slaughter of an enemy; and it was often the case that the enemy would be slaughtered, together with every member of his family down to the babe in arms, so that no one might remain to perpetuate the feud. As, however, the tide of civilization has spread over Asia, such atrocities have ceased to be.

The second tradition which appears to illustrate the patriarchal age, is to be found in the episode in the Mahábhárata, which narrates the adventures of the Pándavas and their wife at the court of Raja Viráta. This tradition is presented in an artificial form corresponding to later Hindu fiction; but it certainly has a patriarchal basis. The Raja kept cattle which were carried away by an enemy. Upon this the ryots and herdsmen were required to bring all the remaining cattle into the so-called city, which was prabably only a fortified village; whilst the Raja or Chieftain marched out with his servants to pursue the cattle-lifters and recover what had been stolen.

The main point, however, demands a further consideration, namely, the belief that ghosts can be comforted by the society of a favourite female, a belief which subsequently found a modified expression in the rite of Sati. It should here be remarked, that whilst a belief in ghosts is fully intimated in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, there is apparently no reference in those hymns to the burning of a living widow with a dead husband; nor, indeed, is there any trustworthy reference to such a rite in the Vedic traditions which have been preserved in the Epics. On the contrary, the widows of those who were slain in the great war of Bhárata were not burnt with their dead husbands, but lived many years afterwards; whilst neither a wife nor a concubine of Maharaja Dasaratha, the father of Ráma, was put to death at his decease. But the story of the

adventures of the Pándavas at the court of Raja Viráta throws considerable light upon the origin of Sati, before it was associated with Brahmanical doctrines, or even involved the idea of a voluntary sacrifice on the part of the widow. The downright realism of the story has already been commented upon, and furnishes curious illustrations of the primitive customs of patriarchal times. The Commander of the forces falls in love with the waiting maid of the Ráni who is his sister. He asks his sister to send the maid to his house, which is accordingly done; but the maid refuses to listen to his proposals, being in fact the wife of the Pándavas in disguise. Subsequently the maid feigns consent, and agrees to give him a meeting; but sends one of her husbands in her room. Accordingly, instead of meeting a mistress, the lover finds himself at the mercy of the husband, who eventually pommels him to death. The brothers of the dead man then determine to burn the living maid with the corpse, partly to avenge his death, and partly to solace the ghost of the deceased with her society in the world of spirits.

This idea is perhaps not Aryan but Scythian; that is, if any opposition between Aryan and Scythian is to be recognized. According to Herodotus the Scythians were accustomed on the death of a King to strangle one of his concubines, and bury her with him, without apparently any regard to her willingness or otherwise.[4] The custom might also have been adopted as a safeguard from all attempts at assassination on the part of a wife or concubine. It may be therefore inferred from these data that Raja Viráta was the Chieftain of a Scythian tribe, which had encamped in the neighbourhood of an Aryan settlement. It does not, however, appear that the Scythians of Viráta were Nágas, or snake-worshippers, like those whom the Pándavas fought in the jungle; although the identity is not impossible, inasmuch as the peculiar habits of snakes, in disappearing in holes beneath the surface of the earth, led to their being worshipped in primitive times as deities of the under-world, and that worship still lingers in every quarter of India.

The difference between the Aryan and the Scythian custom may now be indicated. Amongst the Aryans, a widow was made over to a kinsman of the deceased husband; amongst the

[4] Herodotus, iv. 71.

Scythians, a favourite widow or concubine was sent to accompany the dead man. That the Aryan custom ultimately fell into disuse amongst the twice-born castes, and was superseded by the later Sati, subsequently to the promulgation of the Institutes of Manu, has already been shown. Still the fact, that traces of the rite are to be found in a tribe dwelling in India during the Vedic period, seems to justify an investigation of those instinctive passions under which it eventually merged into Brahmanical law.

Two ideas are involved in the later Brahmanical rite which find no expression in the early Scythic form, namely, that the act was voluntary on the part of the widow, and that it was associated with a well-grounded belief in the immortality of the soul. The widow, indeed, entered the fire with a profound conviction that she would thereby rejoin her husband in abodes of bliss. The Thracians had a similar custom, except that the widow was not burnt, but slaughtered at the grave of her dead husband by her next of kin; and it is curious to note that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul had been promulgated amongst the Thracians at an early period by a religious teacher named Zalmoxis.[5] A further reference to the working of the human heart will indicate, that wherever the belief in a future state has superseded the old crude idea of wandering ghosts, and become the unquestioned faith of the people, a latent desire exists in every wedded pair who have truly lived and loved together, to accompany each other to the tomb; and this desire is stronger in the wife, to whom by common consent a larger measure of delicacy and sentiment is awarded.[6] In India this desire appears to have been brought into play during that phase of civilization when sentiment begins to triumph over materialism; when the husband shuddered at the knowledge that after his death his widow would be transferred to a kinsman, and the loving wife revolted at the idea of being made over to the same individual, who might already have had a wife of his own. There were also exceptional circumstances which would lead to an

[5] Herodotus, iv. 94, 95 ; v. 5.

[6] A story has been preserved in the *Arabian Nights*, in which a man, who has been thrown upon a distant island, and has married the daughter of the king, finds that it is the custom of the country for the husband to follow a deceased wife to the tomb, and accordingly expresses the greatest possible alarm at the discovery.

extension of the rite of Sati. The precautions to be taken by a Raja against being poisoned or assassinated by a female, were rendered unnecessary when the female was condemned to enter the fire after the death of her deceased master, and when the prolonged existence of a Raja was a point of paramount importance to every wife and concubine in his zenana. Again, the unprotected state in which widows were left in a lawless age, and the harsh treatment they would receive as mere dependants in the family, must have driven many a distracted woman to enter the fire and follow the soul of a loving husband. In a still later age, when the Sati became associated with the Brahmanical religion, and was glorified as an act which conferred lasting fame upon the wife, and immortal happiness upon herself and her deceased, it is not surprising that the rite should have become general throughout India. In that terrible hour which succeeds the death of a beloved husband, when the reason is crazed with grief, and the zenana is filled with weeping and wailing, it is easy to understand that a widow would prefer a glorious death before a thousand spectators, and immediate re-union with a deceased husband, to a life of degradation, in which every pleasure would be denied her, and her very presence would be regarded as an evil omen.

Turning now from the patriarchal age, during which the Vedic Aryans were probably restricted to the neighbourhood of Meerut and Delhi, it becomes necessary to glance at the period during which they descended the valleys of the Ganges and Jumná, and achieved the conquest of Hindustan. This era of Aryan conquest may be regarded as the heroic age of Hindu history, but it is almost a blank to the historical student. In Hebrew history the corresponding period of conquest is depicted with a fulness and truthfulness, which would alone suffice to perpetuate the story to the end of time. Indeed the books of Joshua and Judges comprise the only authentic annals of heroic times, when a patriarchal form of government was modified by the rise of individual warriors, who conquered new territories, and ruled them with a strong arm, by the common consent of the people at large. In Greece the heroic age is obscured by legends, which have yet to be subjected to a tedious critical process before they can be expected to yield historical results. But in India the case is even worse. The age of Aryan conquest

may have been one of convulsion and upheaval. The valleys of the Ganges and Jumná may have rung with victories as memorable as those of Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Jephtha, and Samson. Old landmarks may have been destroyed, and a new religious faith superadded to the grosser superstitions of the aborigines. But scarcely a vestige or record of the conquest remains, beyond what philologists may elicit from a study and comparison of languages. Even the names of the men who fought the battles and subjugated the country from the Himálayas to the Vindhya mountains have passed away like the memory of the Shepherd Kings.

There may have been old Kshatriya ballads which celebrated the establishment of Aryan empires at Delhi, Agra, Oudh, and Bihar. If so, however, they have long been converted into nursery fictions, like the stories of the wars of Bhima against the Usuras, or the stories of the wars of the four younger Pándavas in connection with the Aswamedha of Yudhishthira. Perhaps also they have been transmuted into obscure myths of wars between the Devatas and Daityas, the gods and demons; which may possibly be identified with the conflict between the fair-complexioned Aryans and the black-skinned aborigines; although in their present form they certainly seem to refer more frequently to the later antagonism between the Bráhmans and the Buddhists. Here and there in the Epics and Puránas glimpses may perhaps be obtained of Rajas who had conquered the surrounding Rajas, and had thereby attained a certain supremacy as local suzerains. In this manner mention is made of Indra as a temporal sovereign; of Nahusha, Vena, Prithu, Manu, and others; and of a succession of lords paramount who were known as Indras. But these lists, as will be shown hereafter, are utterly untrustworthy. Some of the sovereigns are represented, as conquerors of the earth, and rulers over all its continents and seas. Others are said to have conquered the three worlds, namely, earth, heaven, and the under-world. Meantime the reigns of the several rulers are extended over many thousands of years. It will, however, suffice to state here, that with the dubious exceptions noted, not a single relic has hitherto been recovered, which can be regarded as a veritable illustration of the old Aryan conquest of Hindustan.

Two inferences, however, may be drawn from existing data,

which throw some light upon the heroic period, namely : 1st, That the Aryan conquest of Hindustan was mainly carried out whilst the Bráhmans were employed as mere animal sacrificers, and before they had attained political power as a hierarchy. 2nd, That during the rise of Hindu suzerainties, the Bráhmans may have occasionally struggled to assert their supremacy; but in so doing they met with considerable opposition from the Maharajas.

The rise of the Bráhmans as an ecclesiastical hierarchy was certainly subsequent to the Aryan conquest. When Nishadha, Ayodhyá, and Mithila were already in existence as independent empires, the Bráhmans are merely introduced as messengers and sacrificers; and every attempt to represent them as holding important posts in the government is palpably mythical. The early Rajas were their own priests, and marriage rites were performed not by a Bráhman, but by the father of the bride. Indeed it would appear that the heroic age of Hindu history was eminently an age of sacrifice. During the patriarchal period the assertion of proprietorship over cleared land was celebrated by a Rajasuya sacrifice; and the assertion of local suzerainty by an Aswamedha, or sacrifice of a horse; and it is easy to infer that the acquisition of large territories, and the establishment of substantive empires, would be accompanied by vast holocausts, at which cattle would be slain by hundreds and thousands, and the banquet would be truly national and imperial. It is probable that under such circumstances the mystic sacrificial ritual laid down in the Aitareya Bráhmanam was gradually moulded into formal shape; whilst the extensive employment of Bráhmans at such sacrifices may have originated the caste idea, with which it was undoubtedly associated, that no food was so pure as that which was cooked by a Bráhman.

During the rise of Hindu suzerainties the Bráhmans seem to have been occasionally in antagonism to the Mahárajas. In the myths of successive Indras and other lords paramount, to which reference has already been made, one single idea predominates throughout, which indicates either their Brahmanical origin, or the extent to which they have been manipulated by the Brahmanical compilers. If a Maháraja treated Bráhmans with respect, and adhered strictly to Brahmanical law, his empire was described as prosperous, and his reign as glorious. If, on

the contrary, a Maháraja was disrespectful to the Bráhmans, and gratified his passions without regard to Brahmanical law, which appears to have been the case with Raja Vena; then, according to the myth, he was deprived of his Raj, and condemned to exile or destruction. The same idea finds full expression in the Institutes of Manu, where certain Rajas are specified as having been utterly ruined because they had not learned virtuous humility from the Bráhmans; in other words, who had not shown that deference to an arrogant priesthood, which was claimed by the Brahmanical hierarchy.

The character of these myths, beyond perhaps indicating an early opposition between the Bráhmans and the Mahárajas, may be further proved by a reference to the myths respecting Indra. Here it should be remarked that the name of Indra is sometimes applied to deity, sometimes to sovereignty, sometimes to a mortal hero, and possibly on some occasions it may be the eponym of the Aryan race. In the myths, however, his deity is recognized, but serious charges of impiety are brought against him. In a legend he is said to have seduced the wife of a pious sage; and in the Vishnu Purána he is represented as having treated with disrespect a flower which had been given to him by a sage named Durvásas; and on both occasions he was severely punished by the loss of power. At another time, having offended the Bráhmans, a rival named Nahusha was permitted to conquer him and to exercise his sovereignty. Indra is then said to have concealed himself in a lotus, whilst Nahusha required Indra's wife to accept him as her husband. The lady made no attempt to deny the right of Nahusha, under the old Kshatriya law by which the wife became the property of the conqueror of the husband; but she simply endeavoured to put off Nahusha with excuses and promises. At length Nahusha refused to grant her any further delay; and the lady agreed to yield to his wishes if he would fetch her away in a palanquin borne by Bráhmans. Nahusha acquiesced; the palanquin was prepared with Bráhman bearers; and the amorous conqueror set off to bring away his bride. But the bearers were slow, and Nahusha was in a hurry, and he accordingly abused the Bráhmans, and finally put out his foot and pushed one of them; on which the Bráhman turned round and cursed him into becoming a snake. The result was that Nahusha lost both the

lady and the sovereignty; whilst Indra recovered both, on the implied understanding that he would be more respectful to the Bráhmans in future. This myth is one of many which may be referred either to the earlier wars between the Aryans and the Nágas, or to the later opposition between the Bráhmans and Buddhists.

Possibly some further light might be thrown upon the heroic period of Hindu history, by reference to the same period in Hebrew history; and perhaps the wars carried on by the so-called Judges against the Canaanites and the surrounding tribes, were of a similar character to those which were carried on by the unknown heroes of the age of Aryan conquest against the aboriginal tribes in the valley of the Ganges and Jumná. But there the analogy ceases. Government in Hindustan never appears to have been a theocracy, such as prevailed under Eli the priest and Samuel the prophet; nor are there any traces of a Mahàraja being selected from amongst the people, and anointed King, in the same manner that Saul and David were successively selected and anointed by the prophet Samuel. Consequently no analogy is furnished which will serve to clear away the deep obscurity which at present veils the rise and progress of Aryan conquest in Hindustan.

The third and last period in early Hindu history, namely, the monarchical age, may now be brought under consideration. Here at the very outset will be perceived the vast interval which separates the patriarchal period which is depicted in the traditions of the war of Bhárata, and the monarchical period which is depicted in those of the Rámáyana. The primitive habits and simplicity of patriarchal households had passed entirely away; and beneath all the exaggerations of Oriental fancy it is easy to perceive that wealth, civilization, and luxury were really to be found in the palaces and courts of Mahárajas. Polyandry had entirely disappeared, and nothing remained of it but the Swayamvara; and married life, when not depressed by polygamy, appears in its most pleasing form, as the loving and devoted union of one woman to one man.

Before, however, entering upon the history of the monarchical period, a distinction must be drawn between the constitutional form of government which finds expression in the Vedic traditions in the Epics; and the system of despotism, checked only by

an ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is laid down in the Institutes of Manu. In the constitutional form of monarchy, the Hindu Mahárajas appear to have reigned in tolerably peaceful possession of their respective territories; and the interest in the traditions does not turn so much upon wars and blood feuds, as upon incidents of a domestic character, and the evils produced by polygamy and gambling. Indeed, but for these evils, it is difficult to understand why the independence of Hindu sovereignties should not have been maintained down to the present generation. A glance, however, at the later period of Hindu despotism, during which a Brahmanical hierarchy exercised supreme power, will help to solve the whole problem.

The domination of an ecclesiastical hierarchy in alliance with monarchy invariably proves fatal to the liberties of a people and destructive to all constitutional forms. It seems to have swept away the popular element from the Aryan monarchies in Hindustan, in the same way that it has swept away the same element from the continental monarchies of Europe; and if England has been preserved from a similar fate, it is because during that half-century which formed the most critical period of her history, the Episcopal hierarchy found itself in the first instance in antagonism to the people, and subsequently in antagonism to the Crown. Had it proved otherwise Great Britain might have been in the present day of no more account in Europe than Portugal or Spain; and might have even succumbed to the imperial yoke of a Louis or a Napoleon.

The first and most important tradition, which has been preserved of the early monarchical period, is that of Ráma; but the narrative, as it appears in the Rámáyana, has been so intensely Brahmanized throughout that its full significance cannot be apprehended until the age of Brahmanical revival has been brought under review. The main object kept in view throughout the Rámáyana is to represent Ráma as an incarnation of Vishnu, and a deified protector of the Bráhmans against the Buddhists. But the moral aim of the old Kshatriya tradition was to point out the political evils which were caused by polygamy; and especially to show the mischief which would be occasioned by any attempt on the part of a Maháraja to set aside the son of the first wife in order to give the succession to the son of a younger and favourite partner. This matter was apparently a

favourite theme with the old Kshatriya bards; and no doubt the evils in question might have been exemplified at one time or another in the history of most reigning families in India. It finds expression in the old legend of Raja Sántanu and his son Bhishma; it appears in a still grosser and exaggerated form in later Puránic legends; whilst the fratricidal wars which had been convulsing Afghanistan since 1863 had to be attributed to the fact that the late Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan had to pass over his eldest son Mahomed Afzul Khan, in order to appoint his favourite son Shere Ali Khan to succeed him as Ameer. In the case of Ráma it led to the exile of the rightful heir and the succession of a younger son; and with that event the original tradition appears to close. The subsequent life of Ráma in the jungle, and his wars against the Rákshasas, appear to refer to a later phase in Hindu history.

The main points in what appears to be the original tradition of Ráma may be very briefly indicated. Maháraja Dasaratha was sovereign over the great Raj of Ayodhyá, or Oudh. He had three wives and four sons. Ráma was the son of the first and principal wife; and Bharata was the son of the youngest and favourite wife. The middle wife had two sons, who play subordinate parts in the story; one appearing as the friend of Ráma, and the other as the friend of Bharata.

When Ráma was grown, he proceeded on a visit to the neighbouring Raj of Mithila, where he married Sitá, the daughter of the Raja; and his brothers were likewise married to royal maidens of the same family.

After the marriages the question arose as to the appointment of a Yuvaraja, or little Raja. This appointment is in accordance with an Oriental custom, which also existed under the Hebrew monarchy, of nominating an eldest son to the throne during the life-time of the reigning sovereign, in order that the young Prince might be trained in the duties of the administration, and relieve his father from the cares of state; and above all, that the question of succession might be fully settled during the life-time of the Maháraja, Ráma, the son of Kausalyá, the first wife, seems to have had the best claim; but the beautiful Kaikeyi, the youngest and favourite wife of the Maháraja, seems to have long determined that her son Bharata should be appointed Yuvaraja. The Maharaja himself, like many a sovereign advancing in years, was not inclined

to make the appointment; but the Chieftains and people probably found that he was getting old and uxorious, and they were anxious for the installation of a young Prince and a settlement of the question of succession. Accordingly a deputation of Ministers, Chieftains, and people proceeded to the palace, and prayed the Maháraja to appoint Ráma. The Maháraja, still hesitating, summoned a great Council; and again the popular feeling seems to have been in favour of Ráma. The Maháraja now yielded, and announced to the Council that Ráma should be installed next morning. He had, however, anticipated the result, and had already sent Bharata to the city of his maternal grandfather to be out of the way; and in the evening he hinted to Ráma that he had better be on the watch against Bharata, as Bharata might have had an inkling of the contemplated installation, and taken steps to prevent it by force of arms. The news that Ráma was to be installed naturally ran through the city like wildfire, and of course reached the royal zenana. In the evening the Maháraja proceeded to the apartments of Kaikeyi, probably with the view of reconciling her to the disappointment; but he found her in a fit of sullen rage, in which by the force of angry tears and youthful beauty she managed to wheedle him into promising that Ráma should be sent into exile, and that Bharata should be installed as successor to the Raj.

Meantime and throughout the night the city is said to have been in a fever of expectation. At early dawn the rural population were pouring in to behold the ceremony of installation; whilst the citizens watered the streets, and decorated their houses with flags and garlands; and singers, musicians, and dancing-girls began to perform before the joyous multitudes. At the same time Ráma and his wife Sitá were wholly ignorant of the intrigue that had been transpiring in the royal zenana; and when Ráma was summoned by the Maháraja, he proceeded in his chariot to the palace in the full expectation of being installed with the customary ceremonies. At that moment the blow fell. Instead of a throne, Ráma learned from his weeping father and relentless step-mother that he was to be sent into exile. He broke the sad news to his own mother, and beheld her dashed down from the height of felicity and triumph to the lowest depths of wretchedness and despair. Rebellion was suggested, but Ráma dutifully set his face against disobedience to his father. Ramá

then proceeded to his own house and broke the sad news to his wife; but Sitá at once declared her intention of braving all the dangers and privations of the jungle, and accompanying him in his exile. The hapless pair then walked bare-footed to the palace, as a token of submission; and having taken leave of the Maháraja and Ránis, they were driven by the charioteer of the Maháraja to the dominions of a Bhil Raja, who appears to have owed some allegiance to the Raj of Ayodhyá.

On the night after the departure of Ráma, the Maháraja is said to have died with grief at the loss of his son; but the fact of his death was not made known, as the women who were with him at the time swooned away in horror and sorrow. Accordingly at early morning the palace life commenced as usual. The bards and eulogists sounded the praises of the Maháraja, and the servants and maid-servants were busy with their respective duties. All were expecting the appearance of the Maháraja, when suddenly a cry ran through the palace that he was dead, and the air was filled with weeping and wailing. But amidst all the commotion arising from the suddenness of the catatsrophe, there was a strict attention to constitutional forms. The Ministers assembled together, and decided that the remains of the deceased Maháraja should not be burned in the absence of all his sons, but should be preserved in a bath of oil. Next a great Council was convened, and the question of the succession was debated; and it was determined that the decision of the Maháraja in favour of Bharata should be considered as binding and final. The exile of Ráma was accepted as a disqualification; and swift messengers were despatched to bring Bharata to Ayodhyá. On the arrival of Bharata, the funeral rites of the Maháraja were celebrated without a Sati, but with a pomp and circumstance which forms a striking picture of the times. The bards and eulogists appeared in front, chanting the praises of the deceased sovereign. Next followed the widows and other women of the Maháraja, with their long black hair dishevelled over their faces, piercing every ear with their shrieks and screams. Next the royal corpse was carried in state upon a litter covered with flowers and garlands, whilst the ensigns of royalty surrounded it. The rest of the procession was composed of chariots filled with the royal servants, who scattered gifts amongst the people. In this manner, the procession moved out of the city towards a lonely

place on the bank of the river, where the funeral pile was erected; and the royal corpse was laid upon the pile, and speedily enveloped and consumed in a tower of flames. Here the tradition seems to end, so far as it refers to Vedic times. How Sitá was subsequently carried away by the Raja of the Rákshasas, and was recovered after some severe fighting, but separated from her husband and abandoned in the jungle on the bare suspicion of her purity, are incidents which may have had some foundation in truth, but which scarcely seem to call for notice in a sketch of the Vedic period. So too the alleged return of Ráma to Ayodhyá, and his subsequent reign as Maháraja, form a very interesting climax to the story, but are otherwise associated with traditions which seem to belong to a later age.

The main features of the incidents connected with the exile may now be considered by the light of the three influences already specified. In the first instance it may be remarked that throughout the story flesh-meat appears as the ordinary diet; although, as already seen, such food is scarcely tolerated in the code of Manu, and was declared by later commentators to be improper and impure in the present Yuga. Ráma and his wife and brother appear to have lived chiefly on venison, and to have dried the meat in the sun after the manner of the American Indians. In connection with this subject a question might be raised as to the superior physique of flesh-eaters over vegetarians, and as to whether the change of diet, which was beginning to take place in the time of Manu, ultimately led to the subjugation. It is the common belief of the people of India that the European is stronger than the Hindu because he eats meat and drinks beer; and it was the senseless fear of the sepoys, that the British Government wished to break their caste for the purpose of inducing them to use the same diet, and to strengthen them for the conquest of Asia, that led in a great measure to the unhappy mutiny of 1857.

The pictures of married life in the same story present a remarkable contrast between the intrigues which prevailed in a polygamous household, and the domestic felicity which was to be found even in the jungle, when the hero was married only to one wife. Indeed the pictures of zenana life furnish powerful illustrations of the working of the human heart under circumstances which are altogether foreign to European experiences. It

will be seen that in the seclusion of the zenana the passions of jealousy and ambition will convert the woman into a tigress, as in the case of Kaikeyi; and will impel a woman to suggest a rebellion against her husband, which might eventuate in his assassination, as in the case of Kausalyá. As to the uxorious old Maháraja, who was induced by a young wife to commit an act of injustice which might have imperilled the well-being of the realm, abundant instances of a like nature might be found in almost every family history. It is in fact the story of everyday life, the same in India as elsewhere, aggravated only by the conditions of polygamy. The domestic felicity of Ráma and Sitá is by no means perfect, but it is infinitely more pleasing than that which prevailed in the palace of Maháraja Dasaratha. Up to the period of exile, and for some time after it, Sitá appears as the true ideal of a wife, animated by a loving and self-sacrificing devotion towards her husband; excepting of course in those portions of the Rámáyana which have been extracted from the modern version, in which the character more resembles the Hindu princess of the present day. The subsequent story of the exile is altogether dubious, and Sitá displays a wayward disposition, which is wholly at variance with what might have been expected from her previous behaviour. One peculiarity in the wedded life of Ráma and Sitá is worthy of notice, namely, the absence of all mention of children; for it was not until after the triumphant return to Ayodhyá, and the abandonment of Sitá in the jungle, that she appears in the character of a mother. This circumstance may have had something to do with the sequel of the story, in which the conduct of Ráma appears to have been harsh in the extreme, and is usually regarded with disapproval even by Indian commentators who believe in his divinity. The fact that Sitá was childless until after her deliverance from Rávana, and the subsequent discovery that she was about to become a mother, may have suggested to the mind of Ráma that he was not the father of the coming progeny, and induced him to abandon his wife under the cruel circumstances mentioned in the Rámáyana.

The democratic element in the Raj of Ayodhyá appears to have been much stronger than could have been anticipated under an Oriental despotism. It involved not only the existence of Councils of Ministers and Chieftains, but also assemblies of the

people; and it would appear that even such questions as the appointment of a Yuvaraja, and the nomination of a successor in a case of the sudden demise of a Maháraja, were brought under the consideration of the whole body of the citizens; although efforts have certainly been made by the Brahmanical compilers to represent Vasistha the Bráhman as the superior power who directed all and counselled all.

The religious ideas which find expression in the original tradition are altogether of the old Kshatriya type. Flesh-meat is not only offered to the Vedic gods, but meat and wine are promised by Sitá to the river goddesses, provided only that Ráma returns in safety to the city of his fathers. The old Vedic idea of gratifying the gods with good things in return for favours received or expected, is thus fully expressed; and vows of gifts to Gangá and Jumná are made much after the fashion in which vows are said to be made to the Virgin and Saints in many Roman Catholic countries.

A second tradition, namely, that of Nala and Damayanti, furnishes a far more pleasing picture of the constitutional phase of early Hindu monarchy than is displayed in the tradition of Ráma. The story seems to have originated in an age not very remote from that of Ráma, but it is devoid of all reference to polygamy, and seems more especially to point to the evils which are likely to arise from an undue indulgence in gambling. It is evidently much later than the patriarchal story of the war of Bhárata, for whilst the existence of such a Raj as Nishadha implies an advanced stage in Aryan conquest, the tradition is free from all allusions to polyandry, or to any of the lawless forms of marriage which appear to have accompanied the earlier conquests of the Kshatriyas. Moreover the gambling match of Nala presents a more civilized picture than the gambling match of Yudhishthira, for the losing gambler altogether refuses to stake his wife upon a throw. At the same time the tradition is evidently Vedic. The institution known as the Swayamvara finds full expression in its happiest form; and the marriage rites of Nala and Damayanti are performed by the father of the bride. Moreover the tradition is prior to the rise of Brahmanism; for the proposition of a second Swayamvara in the case of Damayanti, implies the case of re-marriage of a widow, which is altogether opposed to Brahmanical law.

The play of the instincts in this charming story is more delicate and refined than in the traditions of a patriarchal type. The expression of mutual affection is exquisitely true to human nature in a higher development. So true is the picture of the agony of the wife and mother during the progress of the gambling match; and her subsequent devotion to her husband, even after he had deserted her; and her love for the children subordinate to the love for her husband; and the final re-union of the pair after so many trials and sorrows. Above all, the passion for revenge is beautifully modified by a higher tone of moral sentiment than is displayed in patriarchal story. In the sequel Nala not only forgives his enemy, but dismisses him with many gifts.

The democratic element in the tradition is of a peculiar type. Whilst the Chieftains and people display great anxiety during the gambling match, lest the Raja should lose his Raj, the Ráni freely consults with them as to the best means of avoiding the threatening catastrophe. Meantime no authentic traces are to be found of any interference on the part of a Brahmanical hierarchy; nor is the authority of religion brought into play for the purpose of restraining the Raja in his career of ruin.

The religious ideas in the story are all Vedic, but apparently of a comparatively late period. The personification of the gods of the elements is complete; and they appear in the heaven of Indra in much the same fashion as the Olympic deities appear in the Homeric poems. Moreover the Vedic deities, like the Olympic deities, are amenable to moral passions; and appear at the Swayamvara as candidates for the hand of the beautiful Damayanti. The signs by which the blushing damsel knew that her admirers were divinities, and not mortal men, are very poetically expressed; their feet would not touch the earth, their eyes winked not, their garlands were as fresh as if newly gathered, and not a stain of dust lay upon their raiment, nor drop of perspiration upon their brows. Damayanti, however, whilst paying all homage to the gods, would choose only Nala for her lord; whilst Nala in return publicly declared that he would be ever faithful to the maiden with the eye serene, since she had chosen him to be her husband in the presence of the gods.

Such then, step to step, the current of Indian history appears to have run from the earliest glimmer of patriarchal legend down to the monarchical age when the Brahmanical system, which is defined and explained in the code of Manu, began to exercise a dominant sway over the people of Hindustan. The earlier process by which the Vedic religion was gradually set aside by Brahmanical law must for the present be left to conjecture. In all probability the Bráhmans rose from the condition of mere mercenary sacrificers to that of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, by the ordinary means which accompany the rise of a priesthood to political power. In the first instance the Bráhmans appeared in their sacerdotal character as a medium between the worshippers and the deity worshipped; and in that capacity they probably first pretended to explain such religious omens as might be gathered from the manifestations and motions of the sacrificial flame, or from the marks which appeared on the animal that was sacrificed. In connection with this pretended knowledge of the will of the deities, the Brahmans seem to have practised astrology, and to have assumed the possession of supernatural power, such as the production of rain or drought, health or disease, prosperity or calamity. Finally they asserted for themselves a divine origin from Brahma, whom they exalted very far above all the Vedic deities. Consequently they arrogated for themselves a superiority over the popular gods, under which they promulgated new religious dogmas, and introduced a multiplicity of rites of purification and consecration. Subsequently at every birth, marriage, or death, there was the inevitable Bráhman, who thus became associated in the minds of the people with every household event that gladdened their hearts or moved them to tears. Moreover the prayers and incantations of the Bráhmans were supposed to be always necessary to insure the long life and prosperity of all individuals and families; to procure a favourable seed-time and an abundant harvest; to increase the profits of every bargain and promote the success of every undertaking; to purify the water of wells and strengthen the foundation of dwelling-houses; to consecrate and impart new powers to weapons, armour, ensigns, implements, books, and tools, and to ward off every danger and every calamity which can befall a human being and his belongings. In this manner every Hindu has moved for centuries in the fetters of religious superstition

from his cradle to his grave; and the result has been that the national life seemed to have ebbed away.

The evils which have resulted from the establishment of a Brahmanical hierarchy have indeed far exceeded those which have followed the establishment of any other ecclesiastical ascendancy. Other priesthoods, like the Jesuits in Spain, have dominated over the minds of men, and crushed out the national aspirations and deadened the intellectual energies; but then such priests have generally sprung from the people, and have occasionally appeared as the protectors of the oppressed, and have stayed the hand of the tyrant and marauder by the threat of anathemas and excommunications. The Bráhmans, however, whilst occasionally exercising similar powers for the furtherance of their own ends, have been themselves the victims of a caste system which has necessarily shut them out from all sympathies with the masses. In other words, they formed an hereditary caste of priests, which had laboured to degrade the Sudra instead of supporting him, and fattened upon the credulity of a people whom they had neither the power nor will to serve. But still it must not be inferred that the rise of the Brahmanical hierarchy was productive only of evil. There were Bráhmans who passed their lives in divine contemplation, and who analyzed the thoughts, the language, the intellect, and the affections, until they obtained from the depths of their consciousness a deeper knowledge of divine things, and a more enlightened appreciation of the attributes of the Supreme Spirit. It was such Sages who succeeded in weaning away the minds of many from the grosser superstitions of polytheism to the higher faith in One God; and who taught after their own mystic fashion how man might obtain the absorption of his soul into the Divine Essence, or dwell hereafter as a purified spirit with the Supreme Soul. It may be that the aspirations after monotheism, which find expression in the Institutes of Manu, are couched in the pantheistic language of the Vedantists; but even amidst the aberrations of religious thought, the throes of the soul to escape from the trammels of polytheism, are to be found flashes of that eternal truth which is as old as the stars, and finds a response in every human bosom. "All gods," says Manu, "are in the Divine Spirit; all worlds are in the Divine Spirit; and the Divine Spirit produces the connected series of acts which are performed by embodied souls. Him

some adore as present in the element of fire; others as present in Manu, lord of creatures; some as present in Indra; others as present in pure Ether; and others as the most High Eternal Spirit. It is He, who, pervading all beings in five elementary forms, causes them by the gradations of birth, growth, and dissolution, to revolve in this world like the wheels of a car. Thus the man, who perceives in his own soul the Supreme Soul present in all creatures, regards them all with equal benevolence, and will be absorbed at last in the highest Essence, even that of the Almighty himself."[7] It was left for one greater than the Hindu legislator to teach the simpler and purer doctrine : "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."[8]

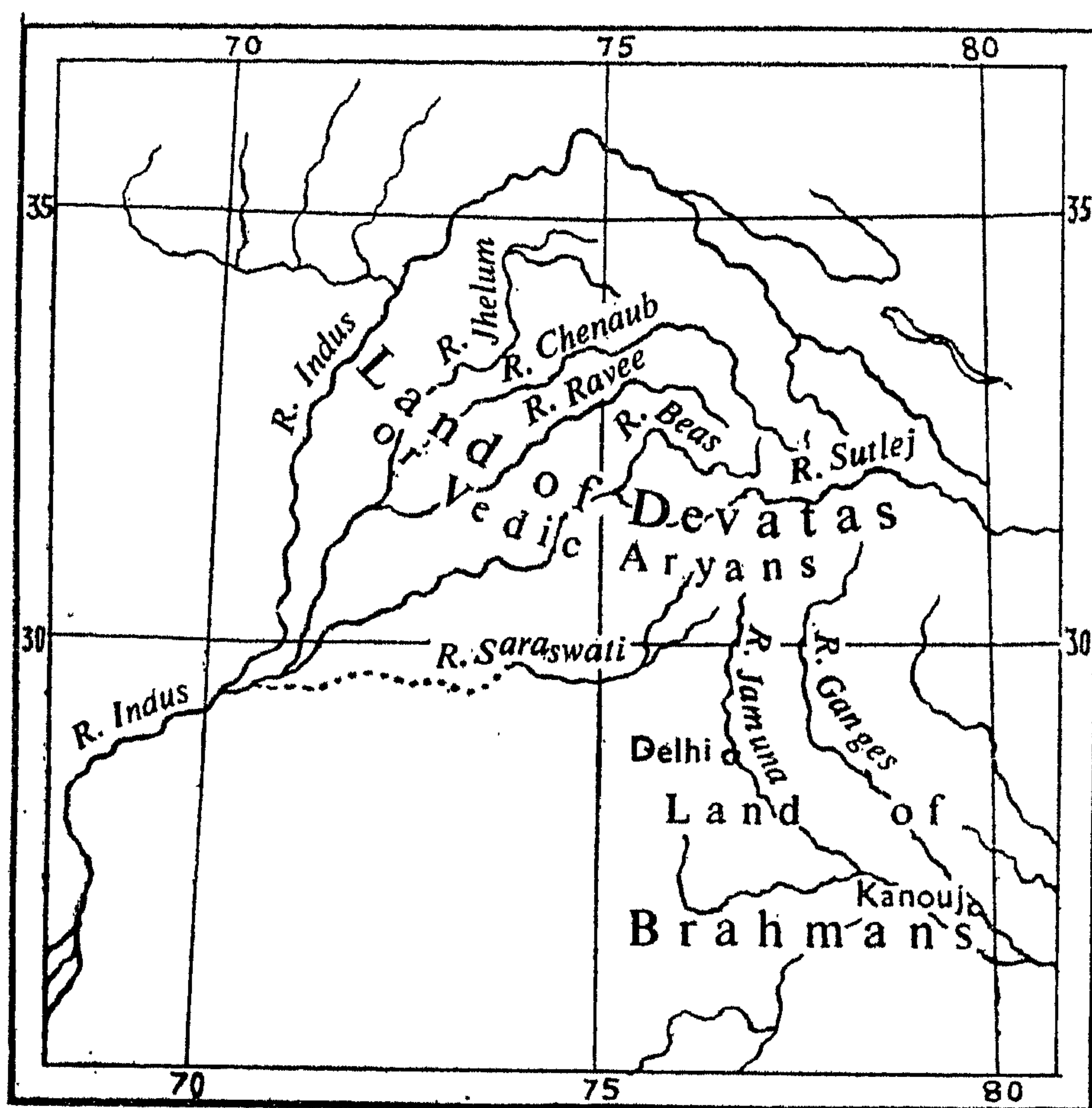
Here it may be again remarked that in the time when the code of Manu was compiled, the area of Aryan conquest had spread far beyond the limits of Brahmanism, and probably included both Buddhism and Brahmanism within its frontiers. The Bráhmans as a body had not advanced beyond Kanouj on the banks of the Ganges; whilst the Aryans had conquered the whole of Hindustan from sea to sea. Again, the Aryans are directed to select their Brahmanical preceptors from Brahmárshi-desa, or the country of the Bráhman Rishis; whilst bitter denunciations are pronounced against atheists and heretics, in other words, against the followers of Buddha. From these data it is easy to infer that whilst the Bráhman missionaries were spreading from Brahmárshi-desa, on the west of Kanouj, Buddhism was really dominant in eastern Hindustan. At the same time it is difficult to say how far the ideas of the Buddhists passed into Brahmanism; or how far the ideas of the Bráhmans passed into Buddhism. Originally the two currents of religious thought may have flowed on side by side, without exciting much antagonism. Subsequently, however, the practical atheism of the Buddhists in denying or ridiculing the gods of the Bráhmans, and the opposition of the Bráhmans towards the conventual system of the Buddhists, brought about those deadly hostilities which eventuated in the expulsion of the Buddhists and triumph of the Bráhmans. Meantime the Swayamvara, the Rajusuya, and the Aswamedha passed away. The rites of marriage were brought

[7] Manu, xii. 119, 123—126. [8] St. John iv. 24.

into conformity with Brahmanical law. The use of flesh-meat at meals and sacrifices began to disappear, and vegetable food was substituted. Finally, the great Aryan empires, which had long been established in Hindustan, began to be swayed to and fro by those religious convulsions which belong to the subsequent eras of Hindu history. Indeed the inquiries which have yet to be carried out in the religious history of India, will be found to be the most important of all. The origin of polytheism amongst the Aryan people, and its development into monotheism, or the worship of the Supreme Spirit, have been in some measure indicated; but before the reader can comprehend the Hindu people as they think and act, it will be necessary to review the rise and decline of that form of atheism in association with asceticism, which is known as Buddhism; to point out the method by which the Brahmanical compilers of the Epics spiritualized Kshatriya heroes, such as Ráma and Krishna, into incarnations of Vishnu as the Supreme Being; to investigate that deification of the passions, which was superadded to the fetish worship of the aboriginal races in primitive times; to unfold the process by which the new and strange gods were admitted into the Brahmanical pantheon; and to explore those forms of religious thought and philosophical inquiry, which were promulgated by teachers and sages, whilst a dense cloud of superstition and ignorance overspread the land. Moreover there seems reason to hope that such inquiries will not only lead to a better knowledge of the progress of religious thought amongst the Hindus, but will help to solve the vexed problem of why Christianity has failed to achieve that conquest over the national faith which it has effected elsewhere. Hitherto the non-acceptation of the Christian religion by the people of India has been referred to inscrutable causes, such as the mysterious dispensation of Providence, or the exceptional depravity of the heart of the Hindu. But it appears that it should be rather ascribed to the current of religious ideas, which has flowed in channels unknown and unappreciated by the western world, and which has rendered Christianity less acceptable to the civilized Hindus of the plains than to the barbarous aborigines who inhabit the hills.

Sketch to illustrate the

History of the Brahmanic Age.



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